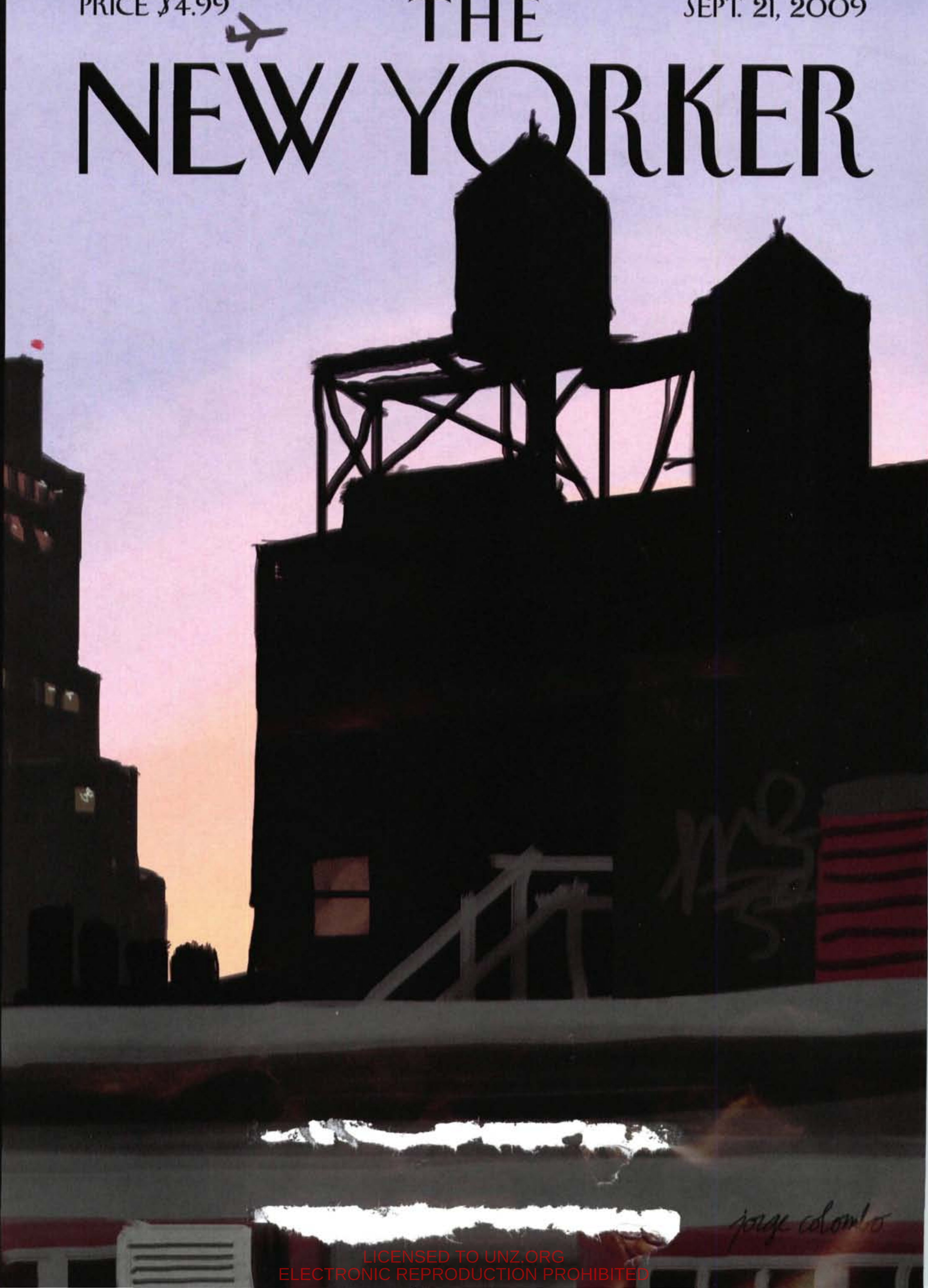
PRICE $4.99 SEPT. 21, 2009

THE NEW YORKER



[redacted]

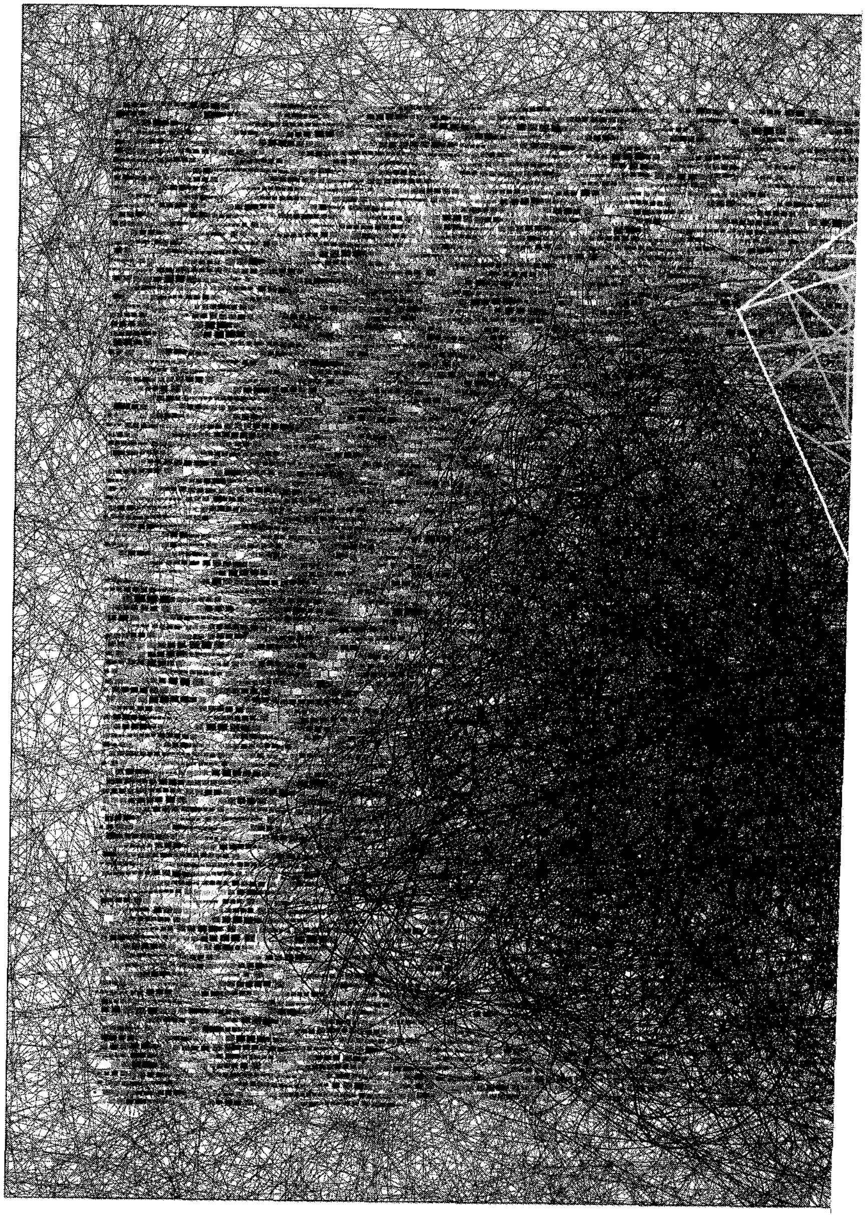
SOMEDAY,

BY JOHN MAEDA

Maeda, president of the Rhode Island School of Design and world-renowned graphic designer, artist, and computer scientist is also a pioneering voice for simplicity in the digital age.

"Digital technology will enable the creation of ultra-complex machines, processes, and imagery. But that amazing technology will be framed in an elegant and simple form that makes it user-friendly. The more complex the machinery, the simpler the interface will be."

This image was created by Maeda with four simple computer programs he wrote to express the difficult balance between what the computer does versus how humans think.

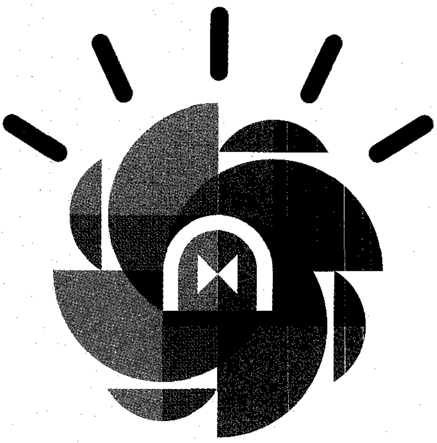


SOMEDAY,
BY LEXUS

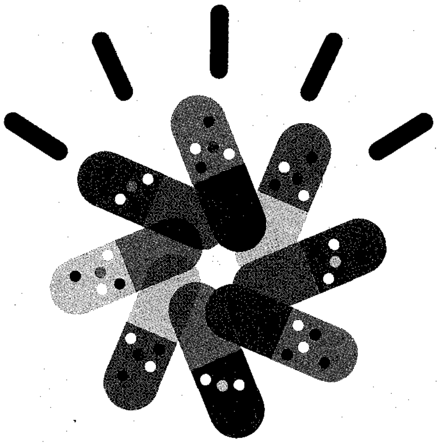
In automobiles, as in technology, all the data and computing power in the world is worthless unless it is simple to use. The available Remote Touch controller in the Lexus HS 250h provides effortless and intuitive access to many of the systems in the HS. Another benefit of technology is its ability to provide access to information from multiple sources. The available Lexus Enform™ with Safety Connect™ service provides subscribers 24-hour live assistance with directions and recommendations, uploaded directly to your Navigation System.* Technology should also enhance our control over our surroundings. The available Lane Keep Assist† technology adjusts *steering torque to help the HS stay in the center of* the lane. Someday really is today. Visit lexus.com/hs.

HELLO SOMEDAY
THE HS HYBRID IS HERE.

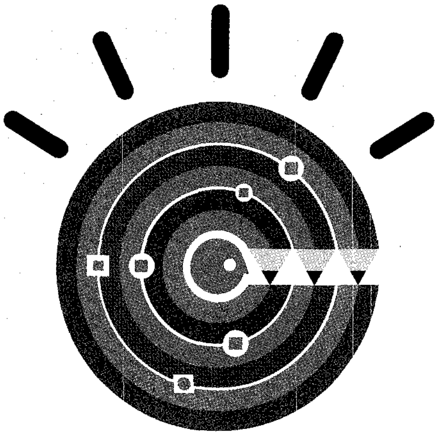
*Learn more about Destination Assist and eDestination at lexus.com/Enform. †Lane Keep Assist is designed to read the lane markers of certain roads and apply slight torque to the steering wheel to help keep the car in the center of the lane. It is not a collision-avoidance system and is not a substitute for safe and attentive driving. System effectiveness depends on many factors. Please see your Owner's Manual for further information. Vehicle shown with optional equipment. ©2009 Lexus.



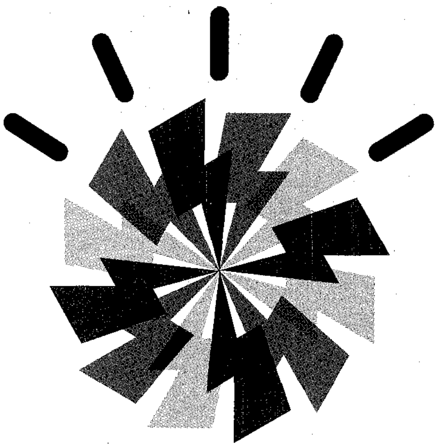
New York has
smart crime fighting.



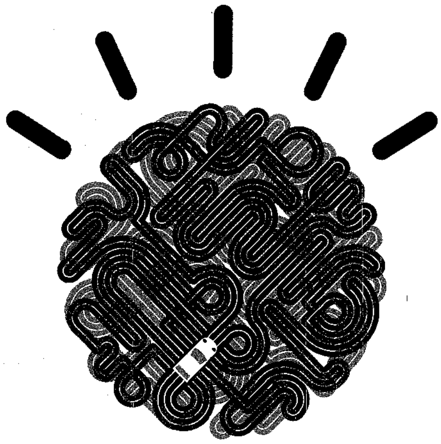
Zurich has
smart healthcare.



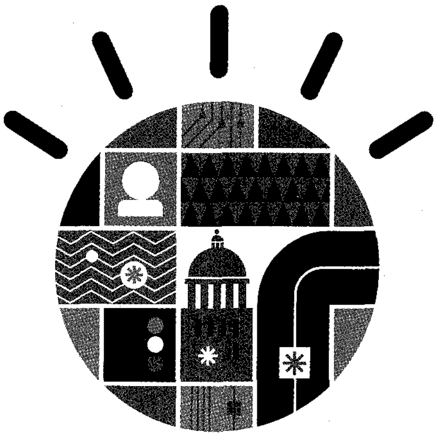
Brandenburg has
smart education.



Copenhagen has
smart energy.



Stockholm has
smart traffic.



Kyoto has
smart government.

Conversations for a Smarter Planet

A planet of smarter cities.

In 1900, only 13% of the world's population lived in cities. By 2050, that number will have risen to 70%. We are adding the equivalent of seven New Yorks to the planet every year.

This unprecedented urbanization is both an emblem of our economic and societal progress—especially for the world's emerging nations—and a huge strain on the planet's infrastructure. It's a challenge felt urgently by mayors, heads of economic development, school administrators, police chiefs and other civic leaders.

The challenges these leaders face—educating the young, keeping citizens safe and healthy, attracting and facilitating commerce—are compounded by the global economic downturn. Thankfully, help is at hand. Around the world, intelligence is being infused into the way our cities work.

Transport officials in Singapore, Brisbane and Stockholm are using smart systems to reduce both congestion and pollution. Public safety officials in major cities like New York are able not only to solve crimes and respond to emergencies, but to help prevent them. City managers in Albuquerque have achieved a 2,000% improvement in efficiency in sharing information across agencies, keeping citizens informed and providing critical municipal services, from residential and commercial development to water to public safety.

Italy, Malta and Texas are applying smart meters and instrumentation to make the power grids in their cities more stable, efficient and ready to integrate renewable energy sources and electric vehicles. A large US city built a transparent management system that helps identify and restructure low-performing schools and increase academic achievement for students. Smart water management in the Paraguay-Paraná River Basin of Brazil is helping to improve water quality for São Paulo's 17 million residents.

These solutions, and many more, are making a real impact today. But they are just the first steps toward a true smart city.

For a glimpse of what that might look like, consider Masdar City, which is being built from scratch near Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates. Planners there are working with top scientists, engineers and innovators to create interconnected systems and manage them through an integrated city dashboard.

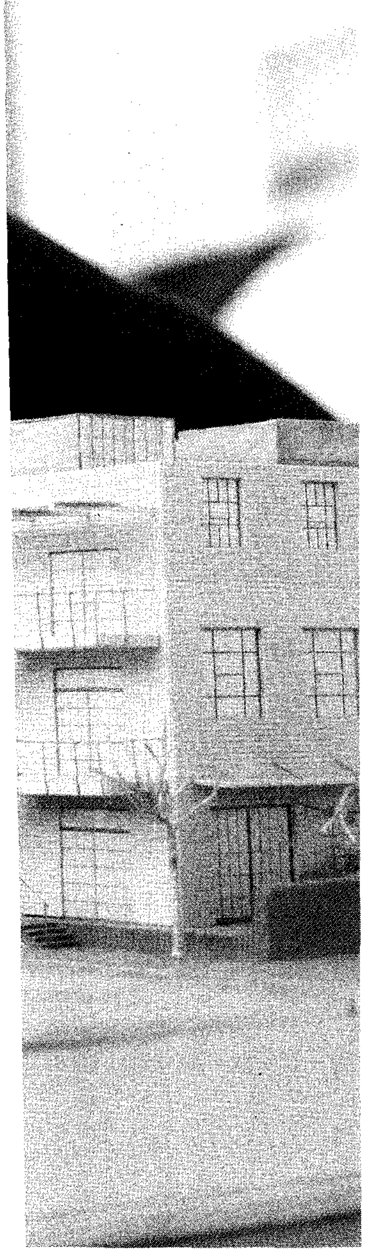
Masdar City's leaders want to be able to fine-tune their metropolis in real time—and thus shape what could be the world's first economically and environmentally sustainable city, with zero carbon emissions, as they go. The lessons they learn—both technological and in terms of citywide collaborative management—can be spread around the globe.

If someone could have observed the Earth from space two centuries ago, he or she would have seen the light from just two concentrations of a million or more people—London and Beijing. Today, there are 450 such shining cities—and they are the economic, governmental, cultural and technological power plants of a global urban age. Our future depends on keeping them running and growing brightly.

That's why IBM is hosting a series of "smarter cities" summits around the world. This October, in New York, leaders and forward thinkers from some of the smartest cities on the planet will share ideas about smart healthcare, smart traffic, smart water management, smart energy and more.

Let's build a smarter planet, city by city. Join us and see what others are thinking at **ibm.com**/smarterplanet

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com and Smarter Planet are trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation, registered in many jurisdictions worldwide.
A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the Web at www.ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml. © International Business Machines Corporation 2009.



WELLS FARGO ADVISORS

With you when

you need help designing your future

Introducing Wells Fargo Advisors The path to tomorrow takes more than just knowledge and insight. It takes a personal relationship with someone you trust. That's why one of our advisors will sit down with you, get to know you and involve you in outlining a specialized plan that addresses your individual financial goals. With over 150 years of experience and offices nearby and nationwide, we're with you when you need someone who has the planning expertise to address today's unique challenges. Talk with one of our Financial Advisors or visit wellsfargoadvisors.com today.

Wachovia Securities is now Wells Fargo Advisors.

Together we'll go far

Investment and Insurance Products: NOT FDIC-Insured | NO Bank Guarantee | MAY Lose Value

Wells Fargo Advisors is the trade name used by two separate registered broker-dealers: Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC, and Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network, LLC, Members SIPC, non-bank affiliates of Wells Fargo & Company. © 2009 Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC. All rights reserved. 0809-3934 (08/09)

18 years after
her history-making
erotic bestseller
DAMAGE
Josephine Hart
brings us
THE
TRUTH
ABOUT
LOVE

"Josephine Hart has
come home in triumph"
—JOHN BANVILLE

"A compelling and
remarkable book"
—TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

"Hart takes us to
a place that, for most
of us, has hitherto
been both unimagined
and unimaginable"
—THE TIMES, UK

How the desperate love
of her husband and the
delicate courage of their
daughter lure a woman
away from her grief.

KNOPF aaknopf.com

THE NEW YORKER

SEPTEMBER 21, 2009

12 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
33 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Hendrik Hertzberg on health care;
Cindy McCain; a battle of Brooklyn.

Jeffrey Toobin 42 ANNALS OF LAW
Bench Press
Obama and judicial restraint.

Paul Simms 50 SHOUTS & MURMURS
Attention, People of Earth

Ta-Nehisi Coates 52 ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS
The Mask of Doom
A nonconformist rapper's second act.

James B. Stewart 58 A REPORTER AT LARGE
Eight Days
Behind the scenes of the financial crisis.

Sam Shepard 82 FICTION
"Land of the Living"

THE CRITICS

BOOKS

Caleb Crain 90 *Culture in the Great Depression.*
95 Briefly Noted

Peter Schjeldahl 96 THE ART WORLD
Vermeer at the Met.

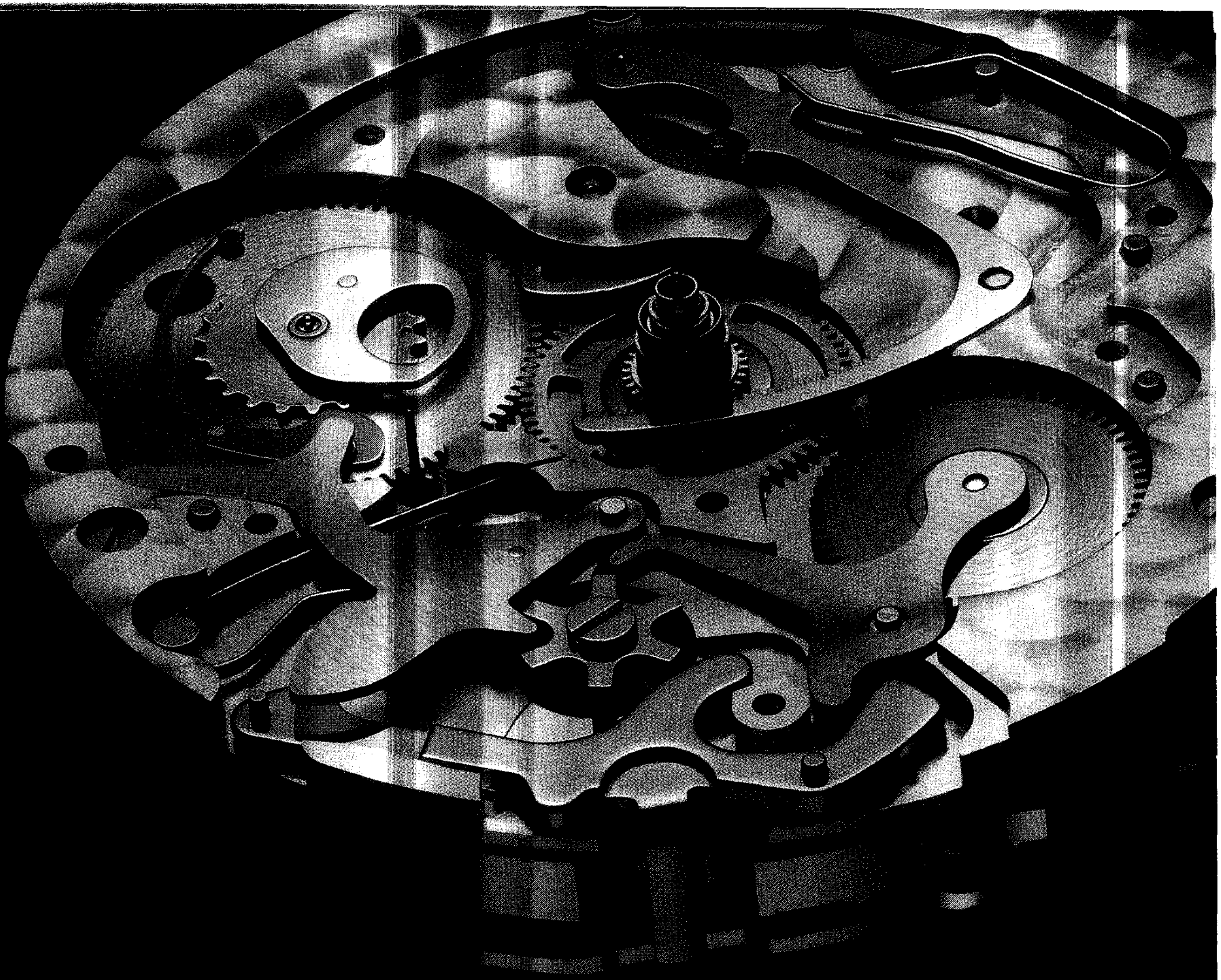
David Denby 98 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"The Informant!," "Bright Star."

POEMS

Tracy K. Smith 45 "Alternate Take: Levon Helm"
Paula Bohince 80 "Mother's Quail"

COVER *"Finger Painting: New Day," by Jorge Colombo* DRAWINGS *Danny Shanahan, Mike Twohy, Pat Byrnes, Zachary Kanin, Alex Gregory, Roz Chast, Gahan Wilson, Bruce Eric Kaplan, George Booth, Jack Ziegler, David Sipress, Kim Warp, Mick Stevens, Carolita Johnson* SPOTS *Ralph Steadman*

www.newyorker.com



THE 4160 MOVEMENT.
A PAGE LIKE NO OTHER
IN ROLEX HISTORY.

Unequaled, like every Rolex before it, the Yacht-Master II is a product of legendary craftsmanship. At its core lies the 4160 movement, the result of 35,000 development hours and 360 individual components. Technically brilliant, on or off the water, its signature complication is a programmable countdown with mechanical memory. With a column wheel that extends through the main plate, both sides of the movement are connected. This ingenious design enables the perfect synchronization between the different elements of the countdown. The result? Racers can now set their watch to the exact regatta starting sequences. The Yacht-Master II. A new generation of technical perfection. **Discover more at rolex.com**

ROLEX
OYSTER PERPETUAL
YACHT-MASTER II

OYSTER PERPETUAL YACHT-MASTER II
IN 18 KT WHITE GOLD

ROLEX

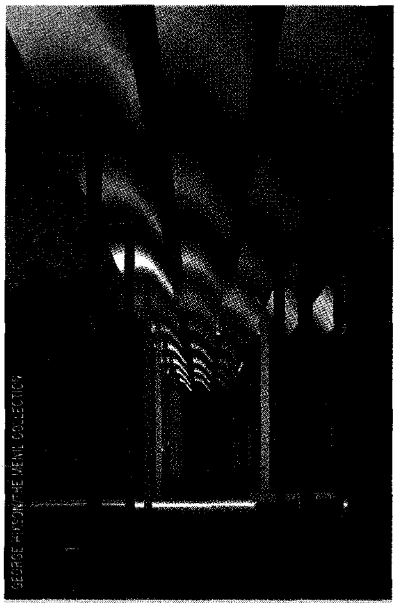
FOR AN OFFICIAL ROLEX JEWELER CALL 1-800-367-6539. ROLEX ♛ OYSTER PERPETUAL AND YACHT-MASTER II ARE TRADEMARKS.
NEW YORK

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.



THE MENIL COLLECTION
in Houston's Museum District
1515 Sul Ross Street
Houston, Texas
713-525-9400

"A mandatory stop on the art-world circuit."
—*Art in America*

"Flooded with light and intelligence."
—*Wall Street Journal*

"A serene, utopian art village.... There is nothing else like it in America."
—*New York Times Magazine*

See for yourself.
Admission is free of charge, always.
Visit **www.menil.org** for all museum information, including an exhibition schedule, and discover the benefits of the Menil's membership program.

THE MENIL COLLECTION

CONTRIBUTORS

Jeffrey Toobin ("Bench Press," p. 42) won the 2008 J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize for "The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court," which is available in paperback.

Hendrik Hertzberg (Comment, p. 33) writes about politics and policy, and is the author of "Politics: Observations & Arguments," a collection of essays. He also writes a blog on newyorker.com.

Katherine Stirling (The Talk of the Town, p. 40) is a member of the magazine's editorial staff.

Tracy K. Smith (Poem, p. 45) has published two collections of poetry, "The Body's Question" and "Duende." She teaches creative writing at Princeton University.

Paul Simms (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 50) writes for magazines and television. He most recently worked with Flight of the Conchords on their HBO series.

Ta-Nehisi Coates ("The Mask of Doom," p. 52) is the Knobler Fellow at the Nation Institute and a contributing editor at *The Atlantic*. His first book, "The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood," was published earlier this year.

James B. Stewart ("Eight Days," p. 58), the Bloomberg Professor at the Columbia School of Journalism, has published eight books, including "Den of Thieves."

Mark Ulriksen (Illustrations, pp. 58, 61, 64, 68, 71, 72, 79) has illustrated two children's books, "Dog Show" and "The Biggest Parade."

Paula Bohince (Poem, p. 80) is the author of the poetry collection "Incident at the Edge of Bayonet Woods."

Sam Shepard (Fiction, p. 82), a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, has a book of short stories, "Day Out of Days," coming out in January.

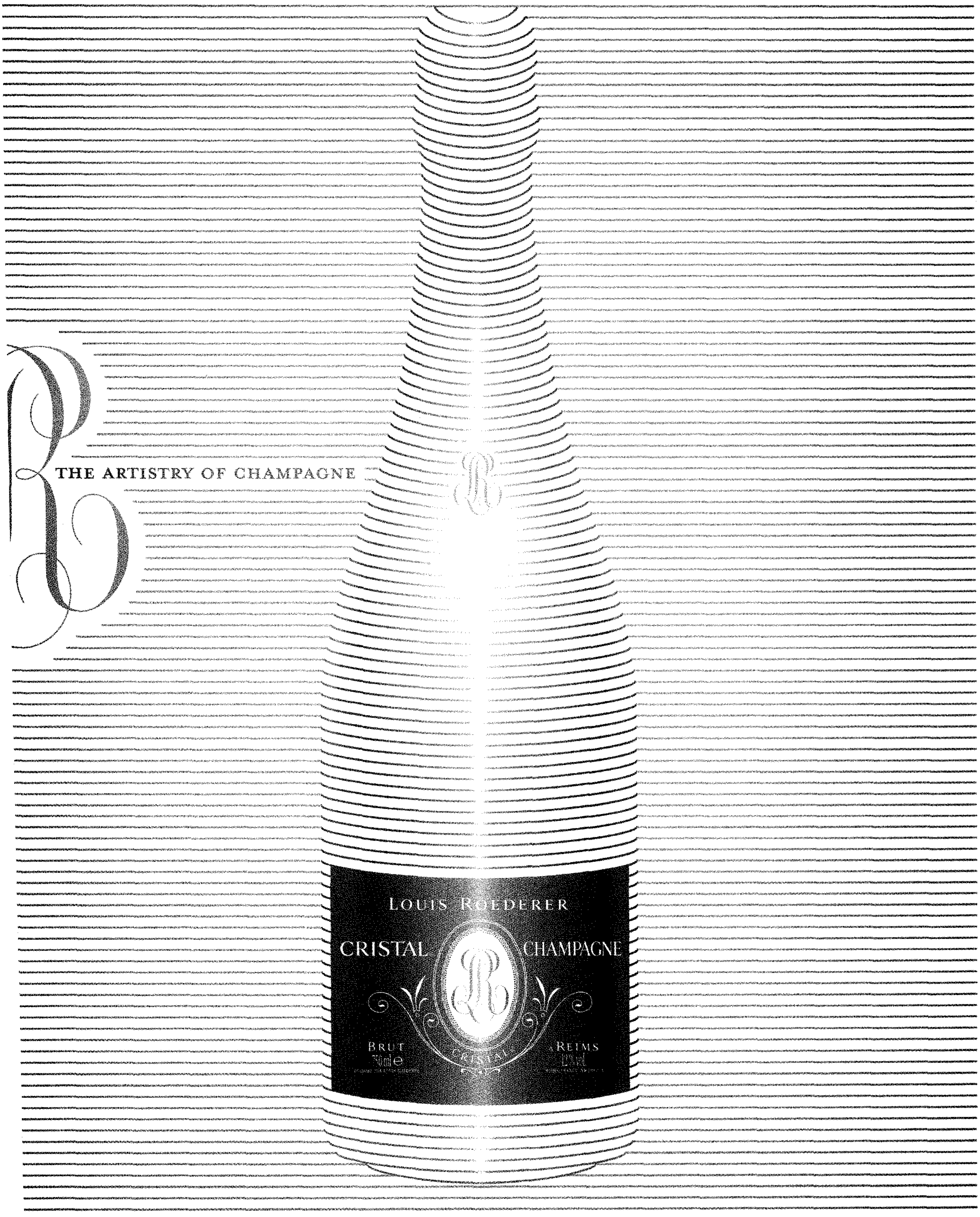
Caleb Crain (Books, p. 90) is the author of "American Sympathy: Men, Friendship, and Literature in the New Nation."

Peter Schjeldahl (The Art World, p. 96) received the 2008 Clark Prize for Excellence in Arts Writing. "Let's See: Writings on Art from *The New Yorker*" is his most recent book.

Jorge Colombo (Cover) is an illustrator, photographer, and graphic designer. His iPhone sketches can be seen on newyorker.com.

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

Video: Watch *Jorge Colombo* draw this week's cover and more Finger Paintings. / Audio: *Hendrik Hertzberg* and *Jerome Groopman* talk to *Dorothy Wickenden* about health care; *Peter Schjeldahl* on Vermeer and other fall shows; *Marisa Silver* reads a Peter Taylor story. / *Jeffrey Toobin* takes readers' questions in a live chat on Wednesday, September 16th. / Blogs: *Sasha Frere-Jones* on the All Tomorrow's Parties festival, *Amy Davidson* on the N.F.L., plus posts by *James Surowiecki*, *George Packer*, *Steve Coll*, and others. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and a complete archive of the magazine, back to 1925.


THE ARTISTRY OF CHAMPAGNE
LOUIS ROEDERER
CRISTAL
CHAMPAGNE
BRUT
CRISTAL
A REIMS
www.louis-roederer.com

Advertisement

THE ARTIST'S PALATE

A LOOK INSIDE THE WORLD OF LOUIS ROEDERER

Join us on an excursion into the world of **Champagne Louis Roederer**. Here you will enjoy an homage to the people in the vineyards and cellars who, meticulously, and with passion, daily orchestrate the score for a great Champagne.

A RIPE BEGINNING

Since its founding in 1776—an auspicious year indeed—generations of Louis Roederer artisans have created a wine that is among the most prestigious in the world. In 1833, visionary Louis Roederer inherited the Champagne producer from his uncle, Nicolas Schreider. By 1872, the House was producing one-tenth of all the Champagne made.

FRUITFUL INDEPENDENCE

One secret to the House's success is the source of the grapes. While many producers in the 19th century began procuring fruit from other growers, Louis Roederer opted for another path. He acquired some of the best pieces of land in the Champagne region in order to gain independence and guarantee the quality of the fruit. Similarly, he acquired and commissioned immense cellars on Boulevard Lundy in Reims. Every step of the Champagne-making process was under his control.

Today, Louis Roederer's winemaking team continues to maintain this focus on quality and ingenious expansion. The House's vineyards now allow it to produce more than two-thirds of its overall grape requirements, while new fermenting rooms and cellars accommodate more than nine million bottles. While the majority of the other Houses must buy most of their grapes, Louis Roederer takes the rare privilege of being a largely independent producer with command of its exceptional *terroir.*

LOUIS ROEDERER
CHAMPAGNE

THE BETTER THE VINE, THE BETTER THE WINE

Today, Louis Roederer's 500-acre vineyards are planted exclusively in the Premiers and Grand Crus of the three Champagne regions: Côte des Blancs, Montagne de Reims, and Vallée de la Marne. Louis Roederer's belief in the unbreakable link between the land and the glass is evident in the role played today by Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon. He is both the Vineyard Director and the Cellar Director. From the berries on the vines to the nectar raised in dark, chalk cellars, he is the person who oversees all the stages of the creation of the House's distinctive style.

THE LOUIS ROEDERER METHOD

After harvest in mid-September and the subsequent delicate pressing, Louis Roederer follows long-held traditions of Champagne making, with its own unique House philosophy. First fermentation occurs in small stainless steel tanks and wooden vats in Reims. The juice of each individual parcel in the vineyard is kept in a separate tank, maintaining the unique features of its individual *terroir.* This first fermentation takes two weeks.

Tasting and classifying comes next. Every morning from January to May, the Cellar Director and his team of oenologists assess the new wines for color, taste, and aroma. Blending follows, as artful decisions about creating the optimal *cuvée* are made. The choice will result in a wine that fully represents the Louis Roederer House style, while showcasing the richness and the elegance of the *terroir.* A precise palate and a House expertise handed down through generations are the essential prerequisites of this art.

Once blended, the wines are bottled in small quantities. Laid on their sides, the bottles of wine undergo a second fermentation. Here the effervescence that is the mark of Champagne develops, as the natural yeast interacts with sugar. The wines will remain here—"on the lees"—for at least three years. Louis Roederer attaches enormous importance to aging on the lees; its Champagnes undergo one of the longest maturations practiced in Champagne production.

TIME TO CELEBRATE

Time continues to be kind to Champagne. Certain vintages of Louis Roederer reach their prime many years after release. At your next celebration—whether it's a quiet dinner for two or a luxurious gala—raise a glass of Louis Roederer and toast the artistry of Champagne.

THE MAIL

DEFINITIVE EDITIONS

Nicholson Baker's excellent piece on the Kindle foregrounds a thorny issue in the shift from print to digital media—that of preservation ("A New Page," August 3rd). The entrepreneur Russ Wilcox's comment that "you can save a hundred and thirty billion dollars a year if you move the information digitally" is misleading. In contrast to what's been done in the case of paper, no one has yet ascertained the future costs of preserving electronic books and newspapers over the long term. Even more significant, what the preserved items will look like is unclear, as data formats, computing platforms, and reading devices ceaselessly morph into their next market-driven incarnations. Imagine if the only copy left of "Imaging in Oncology" were the Kindle version, with its garbled tables and lost color coding? Or, a more likely scenario, if several copies of the book existed in different formats, each with a different visual presentation? In each case, the authority and usefulness of the cultural and scientific record would be severely impaired.

Jean-François Blanchette
Assistant Professor
Department of Information Studies
U.C.L.A.
Los Angeles, Calif.

GHOST STORIES

Judith Thurman writes that Rose Wilder Lane, before collaborating with her mother, Laura Ingalls Wilder, on the "Little House" series of books, had, among other literary efforts, "ghost-written memoirs" (A Critic at Large, August 10th & 17th). My research for a forthcoming book on the history of memoir suggests that Lane was, in fact, the first ghostwriter in history. In 1915, her employer, the San Francisco *Bulletin*, assigned her to talk to a youthful aviator named Art Smith—known as an early practitioner of skywriting and one of the first American fliers to loop the loop—and render his musings into prose. The result was so popular that the newspaper put it out as a book, "Art Smith's Story: The Autobiography of the Boy Aviator." The following year, Lane ghosted Charlie Chaplin's story, and, the year after that, "Henry Ford's Own Story: How a Farmer Boy Rose to the Power That Goes with Many Millions, Yet Never Lost Touch with Humanity."

Ben Yagoda
Professor of English
University of Delaware
Newark, Del.

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

In Tad Friend's profile of Elon Musk and his Tesla car venture, perhaps the most illuminating insight into the sorry state of American car building comes via Bob Lutz, of General Motors, in his dismissal of innovation in the industry: "Tesla will discover that the only way to succeed on the scale we have is to be exactly like us" ("Plugged In," August 24th). Succeed? As in toppling into bankruptcy, wiping out the entire equity investment of your shareholders, and losing eighty-five per cent of the principal value of your twenty-seven billion dollars in defaulted bonds? The only success that General Motors—and its domestic-auto peers—can rightly claim is that it provided jobs and the illusion of prosperity to several generations of employees, by, in retrospect, grossly overpaying both its hourly blue-collar workers and its bloated white-collar administrative force. Detroit created its own class of self-satisfied burghers while the Germans, the Japanese, and the Koreans were busy quietly destroying this delusion through superior design and execution. The fact that a seasoned pro like Lutz is still under the illusion that he and his cohorts "succeeded" should be sufficient reason for Musk, who is bold enough to attempt to resurrect America's automotive leadership, to run from his misguided advice.

David Brail
New York City

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

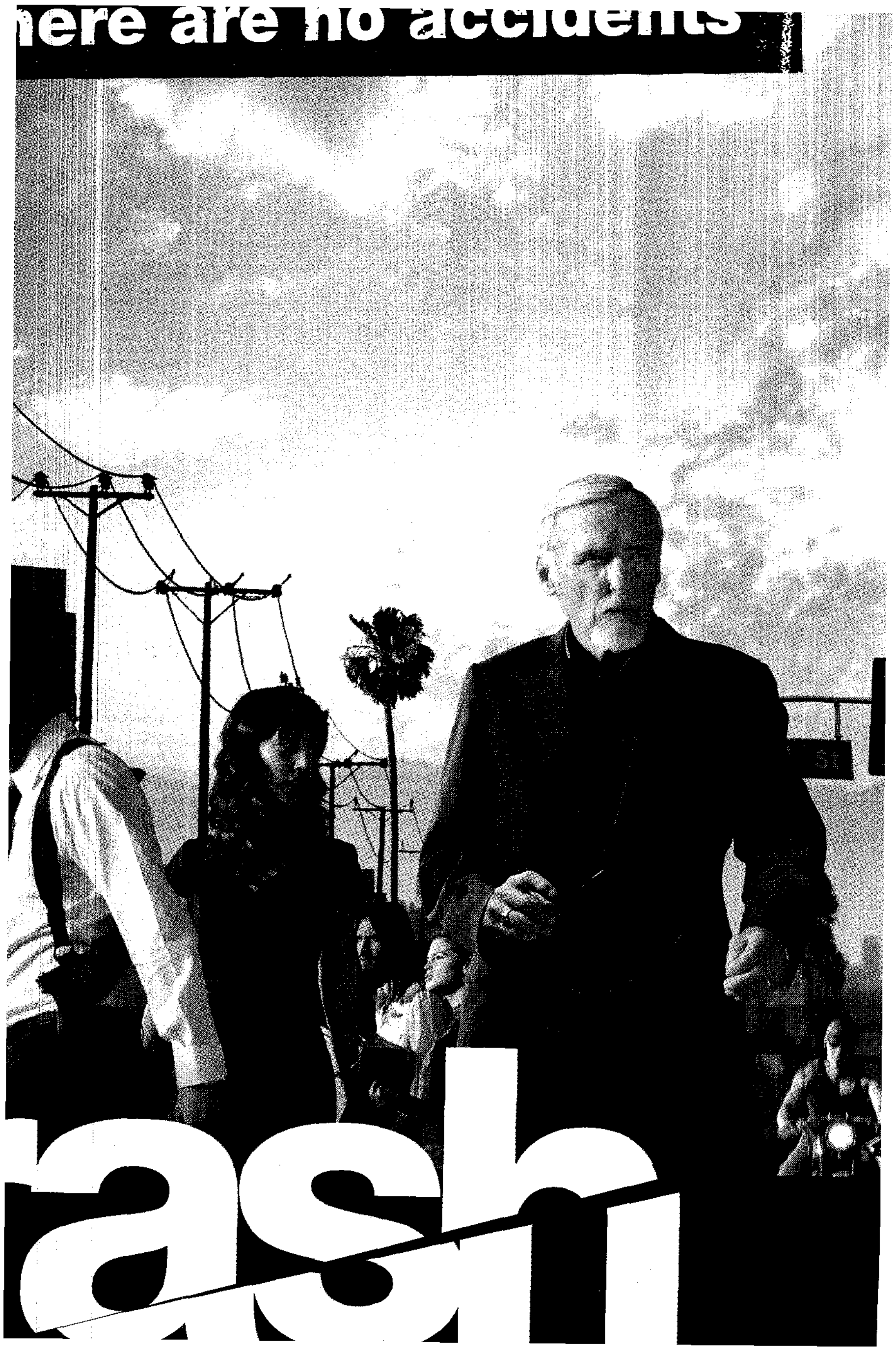
Advertisement

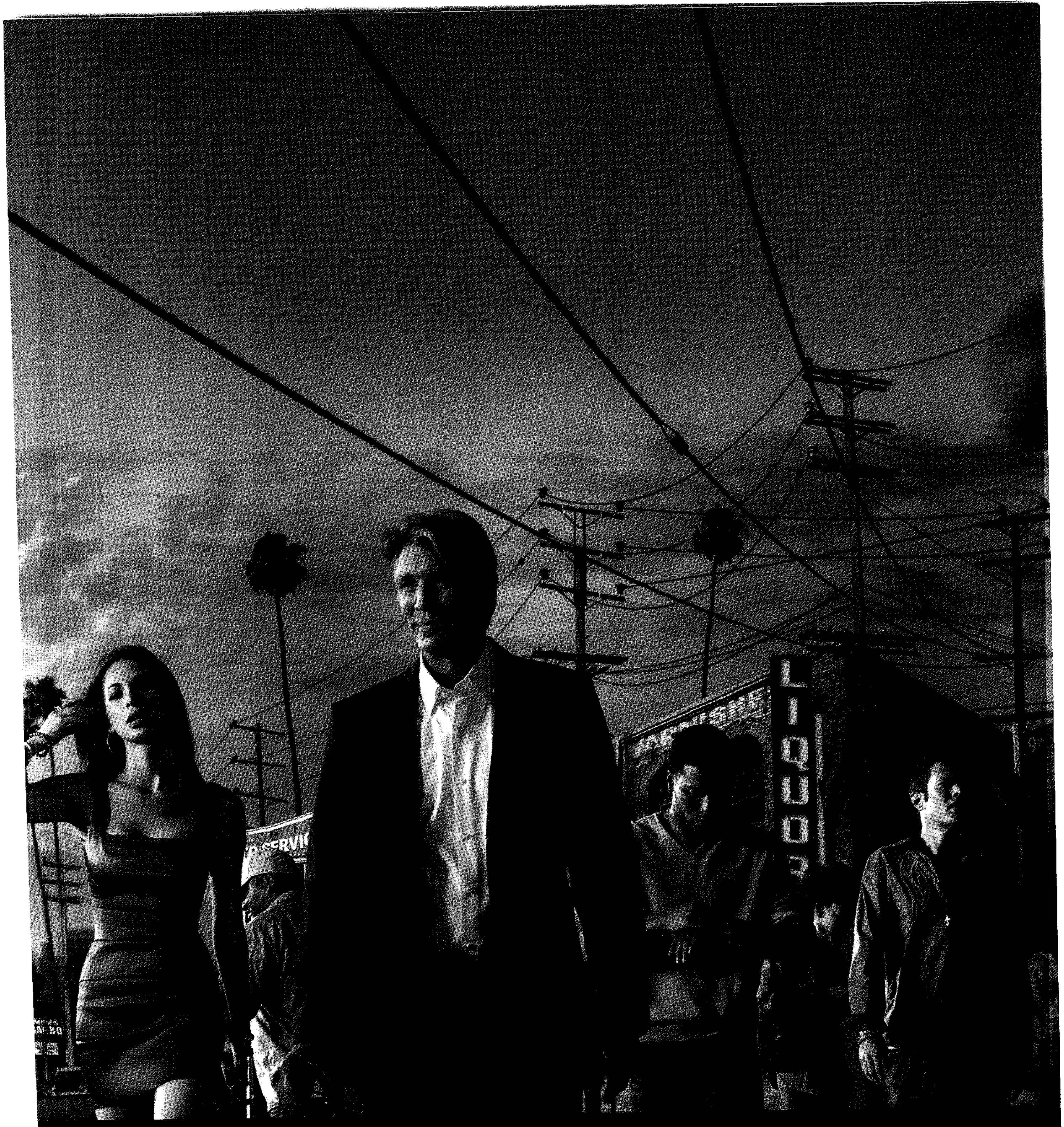
THE NEW YORKER
DIGITAL EDITION

The magazine in your e-mail in-box first thing Monday morning.

Get *The New Yorker* first, with the new digital edition. Receive your weekly copy of the magazine in a convenient, Web-based format, with every page exactly as it appears in print, plus access to the complete *New Yorker* archive. A free four-issue trial of *The New Yorker's* digital edition is available for a limited time only.

Sign up for a free trial today. Go to newyorker.com/go/digitaledition.


here are no accidents
St
ash

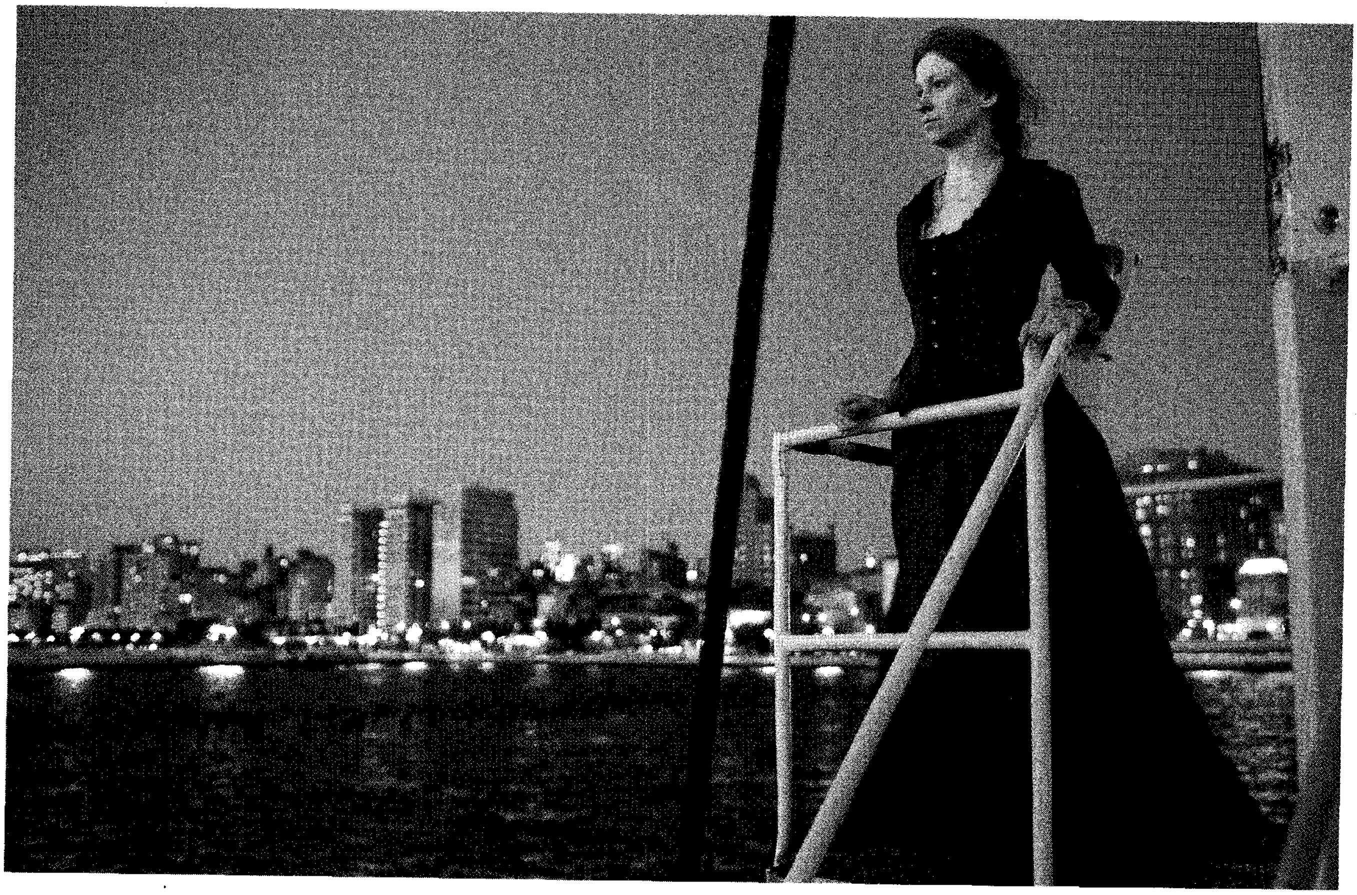


ALL NEW SEASON SEPT 18
FRIDAYS 10PM ET/PT

are you ready?
starz

Hit Movies. Unexpected Originals. Now That's TV.

Season 1
DVD and Blu-Ray available 9/15



GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
20	21	22	16	17	18	19

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
MOOR IS MORE

Philip Seymour Hoffman returns to his stage roots, playing Iago in "Othello," along with John Ortiz, who takes the title role. The Public Theatre/LAByrinth production is performed at N.Y.U.'s Skirball Center. Peter Sellars directs. (See page 14.)

NIGHT LIFE
MIRACLE WORKERS

A year ago, the wife of Mark Mulcahy, the former front man of the jangle-pop band Miracle Legion, died suddenly, leaving him with young twin daughters. Thom Yorke, Michael Stipe, Frank Black, Juliana Hatfield, and other artists recently recorded "Ciao My Shining Star," a tribute album of Mulcahy's songs, and a few of the artists, including Black, will perform them at the Music Hall of Williamsburg. (See page 18.)

ART
HEAVY LIGHT

In the sixties, Ree Morton left her life as a Navy wife and mother to pursue a career as an artist. She worked for just ten years before dying in a car crash, in 1977, at the age of forty. The Drawing Center exhibits Morton's deceptively whimsical work—funny, intimate, and laced with melancholy—in "At the Still Point of the Turning World." (See page 20.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
BABY MOZARTS

The big buzz at the Met this week may be about the opening night's new production of "Tosca," but the second night's "Marriage of Figaro" is notable for its newbie cast. The soprano Emma Bell and the conductor Dan Ettinger make their Met débuts, and Danielle de Niese and Isabel Leonard sing the roles of Susanna and Cherubino for the first time at the house. (See page 22.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND
PACIFIC OVERTURES

The days of unbridled exuberance are definitely over at the city's auction houses. But Asia Week is in full swing, with substantial sales of Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and South Asian art offered at Sotheby's, Christie's, and Bonhams. (See page 30.)

"The Confidence Man," aboard the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Lilac. Photograph by Landon Nordeman.

INTRODUCING THE NEW 2010 RANGE ROVER.

APPROVED BY OUR CHIEF PROGRAMME ENGINEER.

NOW JUST WAITING FOR THE GREEN LIGHT FROM YOU.

SPEAKING OF GREEN LIGHTS, YOU'LL NOTICE A DIFFERENCE THE MOMENT YOU ACCELERATE AWAY.

BECAUSE OUR ALL NEW ENGINES ARE MORE RESPONSIVE THAN EVER BEFORE.

YET THEY PERFORM EXCEPTIONALLY WELL WHEN IT COMES TO FUEL ECONOMY AND EMISSIONS TOO.

BUT DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT.

REFINEMENT REDEFINED

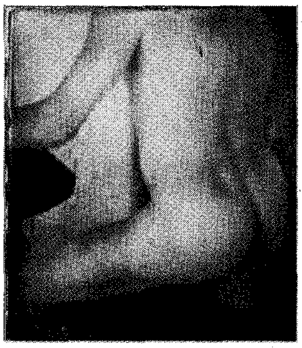
Chief Programme Engineer

THE NEW 2010 RANGE ROVER THE LUXURY THAT'S MORE THAN A LUXURY
Text 'REDEFINED' to 858585 (standard text messaging rates apply).

LAND-ROVER

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
FAMILY OF MANN

Although Sally Mann's husband, Larry, made occasional appearances in "Immediate Family," the photographs that made her famous, he played a supporting role to the three uninhibited children cavorting at center stage.



SALLY MANN, "GOD'S WHIP" (2005)/COURTESY GAGOSIAN GALLERY

But he's the sole focus of Mann's new show at Gagosian's Madison Avenue gallery—a series of nude studies that regard the strength and fragility of the aging male body with extraordinary tenderness. "I look with both ardor and frank, aesthetic, cold *appraisal*," Mann writes. The process may be intimate and collaborative, but the pictures are hers alone. Larry's head is rarely seen; it's his body that Sally details bit by bit, in photographs that look like nineteenth-century relics. She exaggerates the imperfections of the antique glass-plate process until the surfaces of her images suggest flayed, eroded, or pockmarked flesh. Larry's body, though worn down by muscular dystrophy, remains sturdy and broad. Appearing in fragments, he's as magnificent as shards of Greek statuary, and all the more heroic for his vulnerability.

—*Vince Aletti*

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AFTER MISS JULIE
Sienna Miller stars in Patrick Marber's adaptation of Strindberg's play from 1888, about an upper-class girl who preys on a servant at her father's country estate. Marin Ireland and Jonny Lee Miller also star; Mark Brokaw directs. Previews begin Sept. 18. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

A BOY AND HIS SOUL
At the Vineyard, Colman Domingo wrote and performs this play set to soul music, about a young black man in Philadelphia in the eighties. Tony Kelly directs. In previews. (108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

BROKE-OLOGY
In Nathan Louis Jackson's new play, a young man returns from college in Connecticut to his Kansas home, where his brother still lives, to care for his sick father. Thomas Kail directs the Lincoln Center Theatre production. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

BYE BYE BIRDIE
John Stamos, Gina Gershon, Nolan Gerard Funk, Jayne Houdyshell, and Bill Irwin star in the 1960 musical, directed and choreographed by Robert Longbottom, about a fifties-era teen idol. With a book by Michael Stewart, lyrics by Lee Adams, and music by Charles Strouse. The Roundabout production opens the new Henry Miller's Theatre. In previews. (124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.)

THE CONFIDENCE MAN
Woodshed Collective performs a play by Paul Cohen, based on Herman Melville's 1857 novel, about a riverboat con artist, staged aboard the decommissioned U.S. Coast Guard ship Lilac, which is docked in the Hudson River. Opens Sept. 16. (North side of Pier 40, West St. at Houston St. Tickets, which are free, may be reserved at www.brownpapertickets.com.)

HAMLET
Jude Law stars in the Donmar Warehouse production that originated in London's West End. Michael Grandage directs. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

HEAVENLY BENTO
The Berlin-based artist collective Post Theatre presents its meditation on the founding of the Sony Corporation. Sept. 17-19. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 212-715-1258.)

IN THE DAYLIGHT
John Gould Rubin directs a new play by Tony Glazer, about a writer who visits his family, from whom he has long been estranged. A Choice Theatricals production, in association with Vital Theatre Company. Concetta Tomei and Joe Urla star. In previews. Opens Sept. 20. (McGinn/Cazale, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 212-246-4422.)

KILLERS AND OTHER FAMILY
Lucy Thurber wrote this drama, about a young Manhattan woman trying to avoid her dark small-town past. Caitriona McLaughlin directs. Previews begin Sept. 17. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

LET ME DOWN EASY
In her one-woman show, Anna Deavere Smith channels many of the hundreds of subjects she interviewed about the resilience of the human body. Directed by Leonard Foglia. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE—THE MUSICAL
The show based on the books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, which premièred at the Guthrie, comes to New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse. Melissa Gilbert stars, as Ma. With music by Rachel Portman, a book by Rachel Sheinkin, and lyrics by Donna Dinovelli. Francesca Zambello directs. In previews. Opens Sept. 20. (22 Brookside Dr., Millburn, N.J. 973-376-4343.)

LOVE, LOSS, AND WHAT I WORE
Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron wrote this collection of vignettes, based on the book by Ilene Beckerman, performed by a rotating cast that includes Samantha Bee, Kristin Chenoweth, Tyne Daly, Katie Finneran, Rosie O'Donnell, Mary Louise Wilson, Rhea Pearlman, and Rita Wilson. Karen Carpenter directs. Previews begin Sept. 21. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.)

MAHIDA'S EXTRA KEY TO HEAVEN
A play by Russell Davis, about an American who becomes involved with an Iranian college student in the Pacific Northwest. Michele Pawk, Roxanna Hope, Arian Moayed, and James Wallert star; Will Pomerantz directs the Epic Theatre Ensemble production. In previews. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7329.)

OTHELLO
John Ortiz and Philip Seymour Hoffman star in the Shakespeare tragedy, directed by Peter Sellars, in a Public Theatre/LAByrinth production. In previews. (Skirball Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-967-7555.)

THE ROYAL FAMILY
Manhattan Theatre Club presents the 1927 comedy by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber, about the idiosyncrasies of a family of stage actors. The cast includes Ana Gasteyer, Larry Pine, Tony Roberts, John Glover, Rosemary Harris, Jan Maxwell, and Reg Rogers. Doug Hughes directs. In previews. (Samuel J. Friedman, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

A STEADY RAIN
Hugh Jackman and Daniel Craig star in a new drama by Keith Huff, about a pair of Chicago cops whose friendship is tested on the job. John Crowley directs. In previews. (Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

STILL LIFE
Will Frears directs Alexander Dinelaris's play, about a photographer whose sudden avoidance of her craft and subsequent despair is disrupted by an unlikely romance. An MCC Theatre production, starring Dominic Chianese, Adriane Lenox, Sarah Paulson, Halley Feiffer, and Frederick Weller. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

SUPERIOR DONUTS
Michael McKean stars in the latest play by Tracy Letts, about a white ex-hippie who owns a rundown doughnut shop in a changing Chicago neighborhood, and employs a black teen-ager who tries to improve the place. Tina Landau directs. In previews. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

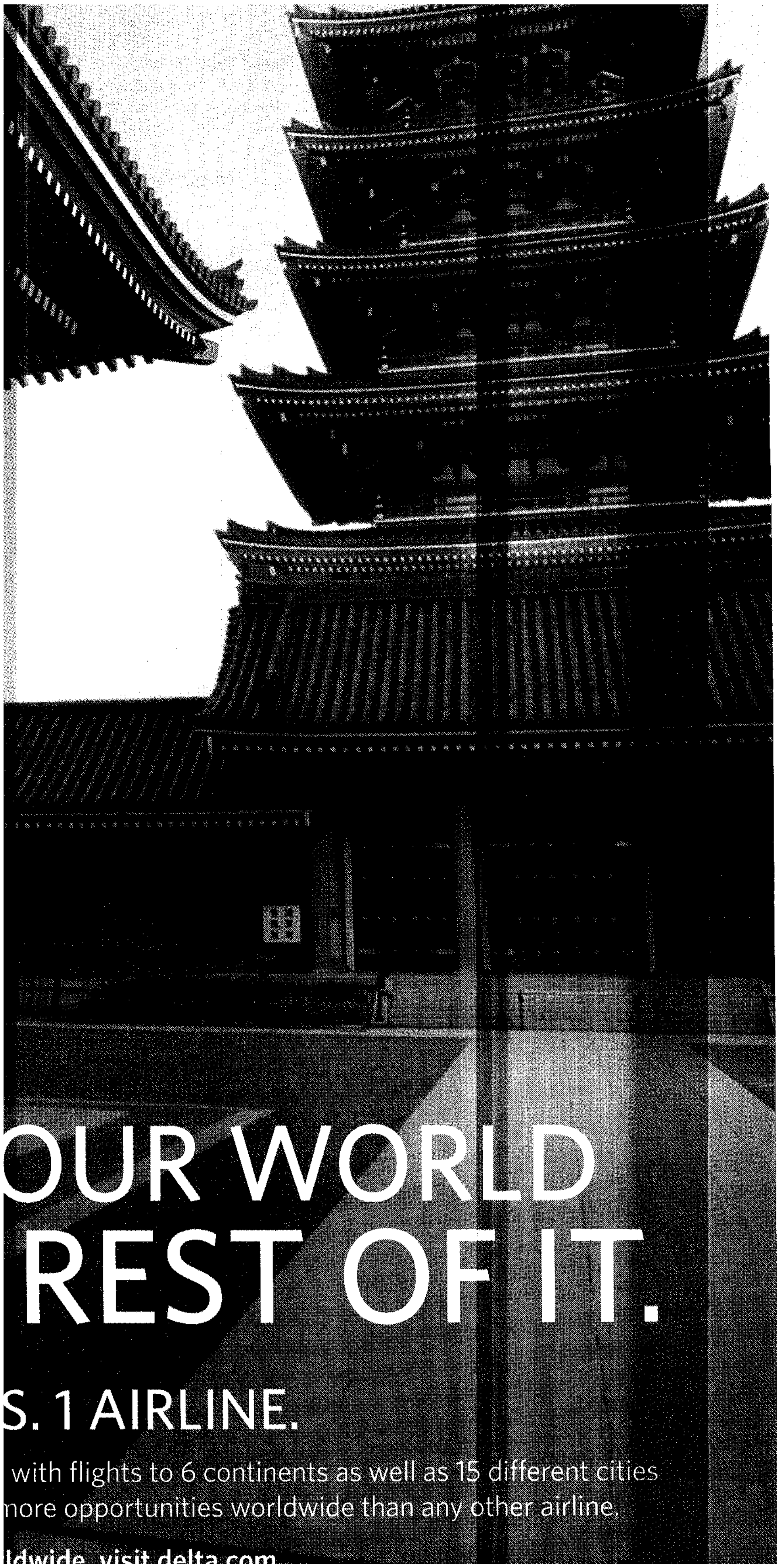
TWO UNRELATED PLAYS BY DAVID MAMET
At Atlantic Theatre Company, Neil Pepe directs "Keep Your Pantheon" and "School." In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 212-279-4200.)

VIGIL
Morris Panych wrote this dark comedy, about a lowly bank worker tending to his wealthy elderly aunt. Stephen Dimenna directs. Previews begin Sept. 20. (DR2, 103 E. 15 St. 212-239-6200.)

WISHFUL DRINKING
Carrie Fisher performs her solo autobiographical show, about her drinking, addiction, and depression in Hollywood. Tony Taccone directs. Previews begin Sept. 22. (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

NOW PLAYING

THE BEREAVED
In Thomas Bradshaw's newest play, the twenty-nine-year-old author revisits themes he's dealt with before—namely, how racism informs sexism and how sexism defines most relationships. Here, we meet Carol (McKenna Kerrigan), a young Type A white lawyer, and her less than successful husband, Michael (Andrew Garman, performing in blackface in one scene), who sometimes works as an adjunct professor, when he's not writing about Mao Tse-tung and doing blow at home. "The Bereaved" is an ironical title. Even as Carol lies dying of heart failure in a hospital room, her hus-


OUR WORLD
REST OF IT.
S. 1 AIRLINE.

with flights to 6 continents as well as 15 different cities
nore opportunities worldwide than any other airline.
ldwide, visit delta.com

band and son (the charming Vincent Madero) become involved with women who not only encourage their negative behavior but can't seem to live without it themselves. Bradshaw is an ambitious writer—completely sui generis. And while this production has a generally strong cast—in addition to Madero, his girlfriend, played by Jenny Seastone Stern, is especially fine—the play is too slight to do all that Bradshaw means to accomplish, judging from what he has done before: to throw out the comfort that folklore generally provides and show just how craven and twisted we all are when it comes to the subject of race. (The Wild Project, 195 E. 3rd St. 212-352-3101.)

The chamber-pop group Fanfarlo visits the Bell House and the Bowery Ballroom.

RACHEL DOMM

BEYOND THE HIGH VALLEY
Ralph Lee and his Mettawee River Theatre Company use puppets and masks to present a Quechua folk story, about a young woman who is carried off by a condor. (Outdoor Garden of St. John the Divine, 111th St. and Amsterdam Ave. 212-929-4777. Through Sept. 20.)

HOMER'S ODYSSEY
Stripped of the grandeur of Homer's language, and set for the stage in plain English, the Odyssey turns out to be a string of misogynistic fairy tales, at least in the hands of the British poet and playwright Simon Armitage. The dumbing down of a great epic, though, is more entertaining than you might think, especially when the director, J. Scott Reynolds, throws in surprises like a fabulous giant puppet as Cyclops. But it goes on too long: two hours and forty minutes of ten actors playing the wind, the sea, and a bunch of goofball sailors travelling from vixen to vixen. Still, Reynolds's directing is imaginative, and the actors are as believable as gods as they are as nasty men. (Theatres at 45 Bleecker Street, 45 Bleecker St. 800-838-3006. Through Sept. 19.)

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?
Mint Theatre Company presents a revival of Lennox Robinson's comedy from 1933, about a travelling theatre troupe that wreaks havoc in a small Irish seaside village when it arrives to perform its classic repertory. Jonathan Bank directs. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

OOHRAH!
"Are we white trash?" an Army wife asks with a fearful earnestness about ninety minutes into Bekah Brunstetter's new play about a young North Carolinian military family. The answer is unclear, given the broad strokes with which the cast of sitcom-style Southern types is painted. Brunstetter has a good ear for folksy non sequiturs (which bring to mind the better works of Beth Henley), but she leaves little room among the well-turned one-liners for moments of real emotional complexity, relying instead on melodramatic staples of the genre—the senile grandpa; the sassy, precocious kid; the soldier returned from Iraq, struggling to adjust; the lonely, neurotic wife. Sadly, the turn toward pathos at the eleventh hour feels unearned. (Atlantic Stage 2, at 330 W. 16th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE PRIDE OF PARNELL STREET
The night that Ireland lost in the 1990 World Cup, Joe (Aidan Kelly), a young ne'er-do-well, came home from the pub and beat his beloved young wife, Janet (Mary Murray), bloody, while their children slept nearby. That was nine years ago, and now Joe and Janet, who haven't seen each other since, are swapping monologues from opposite ends of the stage (with an exquisite set by Sabine Dargent), each adding progressively sadder and more touching details to a story that is as much about Ireland in the decade leading up to the millennium as it is about what true love does to us all. The monologues, though beautifully written by Sebastian Barry (directed by Jim Culleton), begin to feel long after an hour and forty minutes, but the performances—especially Murray's, whose understatement is masterly—are stunning. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE PROVENANCE OF BEAUTY
Foundry Theatre ("Telephone") offers a travelogue performed on a bus tour of the South Bronx, written by the poet Claudia Rankine and directed by Melanie Joseph and Shawn Sides. (The bus leaves from the Elmendorf Reformed Church, at 171 E. 121st St., between Lexington and Third Aves. For reservations, which are required, call 866-811-4111.)

THE RETRIBUTIONISTS
Playwrights Horizons begins its season with a new thriller by Daniel Goldfarb, about a group of Jewish freedom fighters in 1946. Leigh Silverman directs. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

Also Playing

BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL: Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **GOD OF CARNAGE:** Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **HAIR: THE AMERICAN TRIBAL LOVE-ROCK MUSICAL:** Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **IN THE HEIGHTS:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **NEXT TO NORMAL:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **OUR TOWN:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-868-4444. **THE PIED PIPERS OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE:** Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-352-3101. **ROCK OF AGES:** Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100. **SOUTH PACIFIC:** Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200. **THE 39 STEPS:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE TOXIC AVENGER:** New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **WEST SIDE STORY:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-239-6200.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

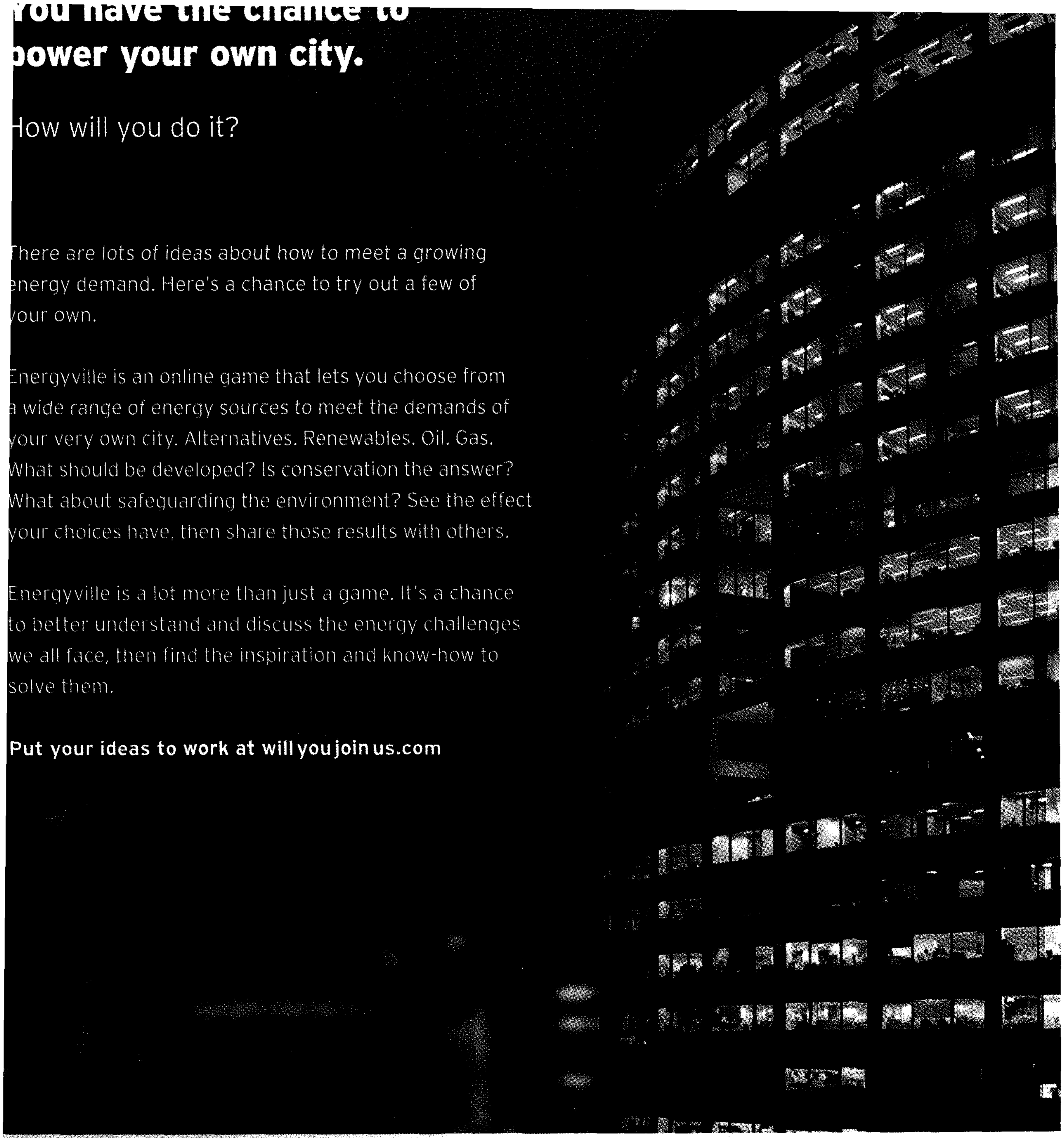
B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Sept. 17: The blues guitarist **Johnny Winter.** Sept. 18-19: The British guitarist **Robin Trower,** who has long been dogged by comparisons to Jimi Hendrix, has a lengthy rock résumé dating back to the sixties. Sept. 20: **Steeleye Span.** "Folk rock" had a quite different meaning on the other side of the Atlantic. In America in the sixties, the Byrds were putting jangly guitars behind Pete Seeger's "Turn, Turn, Turn" and the Turtles were giving a pop slant to Dylan's "It Ain't Me, Babe." In England, young bands were taking the old murder ballads, plugging in, and jacking up the tempo, but the singing itself remained staunchly traditional. One of the best singers in this style—along with Sandy Denny, of Fairport Convention, and Annie Haslam, of Renaissance—was Maddy Prior, of Steeleye Span, and she fronts the band to this day.

THE BELL HOUSE
149 7th St., between Second and Third Aves., Brooklyn (718-643-6510)—Sept. 16: **Rhett Miller,** the front man for the Old 97's. If his alt-country work with the Old 97's is all about high-octane American rock-and-roll, Miller's solo albums are more exquisitely crafted studio pieces. He has been performing with a backing band of late, unfortunately called the Serial Lady Killers, but give him that, and interpret it as a tongue-in-cheek lamentation of his lasting status as an indie-rock sex icon. Sept. 22: The U.K. five-piece **Fanfarlo** takes its name from Baudelaire's novella about a young poet and a dancer. Their sprawling chamber-pop oeuvre offers an intoxicating combination of melancholy and wonder.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Sept. 17: The **Horrors** first staggered out of London a few years ago as a stylishly bedraggled group of young men playing slightly derivative sloppy, organ-laden garage rock. After the success of their 2007 début album, "Strange House," the band abandoned much of their theatrics, roped in Portishead's mastermind, Geoff Barrow, as a co-producer, and reinvented themselves. The end result, their promising sophomore album, "Primary Colours," is full of glacial soundscapes that call to mind the adventurous German bands of the Krautrock era. Sept. 21: **Fanfarlo** (see the Bell House). Sept. 22: The British duo **Soulsavers** make electronic music that's more suited to deep contemplation than to limb-flailing hedonism. For their 2007 album, "It's Not How Far You Fall, It's the Way You Land," the band recruited the lauded grunge veteran and former Screaming Trees front man **Mark Lanegan,** whose gritty, haunted performance stole the show. They've continued to work with Lanegan for their new album, "Broken," which resumes their exploration of the darker side of the spirit.

BROOKLYN MASONIC TEMPLE
317 Clermont Ave. (866-468-7619)—Sept. 22: **Sunn O))).** Bring earplugs.

CAMEO GALLERY
The Lovin' Cup Café, 93 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-302-1180)—Sept. 17: Named for the eighteenth-century diplomatic episode that



brought the United States dangerously close to open war with France, the **XYZ Affair** traffics in broadly appealing power pop.

CITY WINERY
155 Varick St. (212-608-0555)—Sept. 18: The New York Gypsy Festival continues with appearances by the lively Hungarian rock band **Little Cow** and **Hazmat Modine**, a fascinating local group whose work incorporates a wide range of instruments. (For more information about the festival, visit www.nygypsyfest.com.)

FILLMORE NEW YORK AT IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Sept. 18: Hailing from ultraconservative Orange County, **Stryper** emerged in the mid-eighties as a proudly Christian hard-rock band, flying squarely in the face of hedonistic hair metal.

THE MARKET HOTEL
1142 Myrtle Ave., at Broadway, Brooklyn (No phone)—Sept. 18: **Miho Hatori** is perhaps best known for being half of Cibo Matto, the late-twentieth-century New York pop outfit. She has continued to grow with her accomplished solo records, effortlessly incorporating trip-hop, samba, funk, and ambient music in global soundtracks full of urban energy and creativity.

MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG
66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—Sept. 20: **Frank Black** headlines a concert to benefit the musician Mark Mulcahy, who led Miracle Legion in the eighties. Last September, Mulcahy's wife died suddenly, leaving him alone with his young twin daughters. Coming to his aid, a number of musicians, including Thom Yorke, Michael Stipe, Frank Black, David Berkeley, Vic Chesnutt, Dinosaur Jr., the National, and Juliana Hatfield, recorded a tribute album, "Ciao My Shining Star: The Songs of Mark Mulcahy." Black will be joined by the singer **David Berkeley** and other musicians. The graphic novelist **Ben Katchor** will also be on hand.

PIANOS
158 Ludlow St. (212-505-3733)—Sept. 19: **Digital Leather**, the latest band signed to the rough-hewn blues label Fat Possum, is managed by the garage-rock wildman Jay Reatard. The act is the brainchild of a multi-instrumentalist and singer named Shawn Foree, and he has a penchant for driving rhythms that shudder along like a thirty-year-old Chevrolet barrelling down a dirt road.

(LE) POISSON ROUGE
158 Bleecker St. (212-505-3474)—Sept. 17: The masterly New York rock musician **Richard Lloyd**, best known as Tom Verlaine's alter-guitarist in Television, delivers a rare local performance of his solo work. Lloyd, who has been releasing his own material since shortly after Television's first breakup (notably his tuneful solo début, "Alchemy," in 1979), combines lyrical guitar solos with understated, engaging vocals. Lloyd will be backed up by his band, the SufiMonkeys.

SANTOS PARTY HOUSE
96 Lafayette St. (212-584-5492)—Sept. 21-22: The English metaphysician and occultist Aleister Crowley has long been a muse to musicians (Jimmy Page most famously) and is now the inspiration for a diverse two-day gathering, the "Musicka Mystica Maxima" festival, which celebrates his influence as well as the autumnal equinox. Highlights include the strange and haunting psychedelic folk of the Midwestern duo **Spires That in the Sunset Rise**, the industrial-music pioneer **Genesis P-Orridge**, and an improvised duet between the saxophone visionary **John Zorn** and the producer and bassist **Bill Laswell.**

UNION HALL
702 Union St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-638-4400)—Sept. 18: **This Is Ivy League.** When not jet-setting around the world, paying their bills with the teenybop band Cobra Starship, the bassist Alex Suarez and the guitarist Ryland Blackinton sit back in their Brooklyn bedrooms and fashion revivalist pop gems, sixties-style. Live, they come off as awkward and tender, trading beguiling twee hooks and folk-rock harmonies in what must be a welcome vacation from their main form of employment.

UNION POOL
484 Union Ave., Brooklyn (718-609-0484)—Sept. 19: **Nadja** (the multi-instrumentalist Aidan Baker and the bassist Leah Buckareff) produce massive textured investigations into the vanishing point between doom metal and ambient drone.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Sept. 16: The bold local singer-songwriter **Ingrid Michaelson's** sentimental and slithery songs have popped up in living rooms across America, in television commercials (for Old Navy and Chevrolet) and TV shows (such as "Grey's Anatomy"). She's on tour playing songs from a sparkling new album, "Everybody," which has landed in the No. 1 spot on the iTunes chart (making it a hit in the indie world she resides in). Sept. 18: **. . . And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead**, a ferocious indie combo from Austin, Texas, first emerged in the mid-nineties with a new brand of progressive rock infused with the anarchic execution and attitude of vintage punk.

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
Sept. 18: Contemporary Mongolian folk music with **Hanggai**, a group of young musicians who wield traditional instruments with a rock-and-roll attitude. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through Sept. 19: The Oak Room, a local bastion of old-school panache, celebrates its thirtieth anniversary by presenting another cultural survivor, **Jack Jones.** The singer, who is seventy-one, wrings beauty from standards with a confident elegance that only experience can impart.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Sept. 16-19: The prodigiously talented **James Carter** has the sweeping history of jazz, as well as an astonishing command of saxophones, clarinets, and flute, at his fingertips.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Sept. 15-20: Forty years after its inception, the **Manhattan Transfer** remains the top name in vocal jazz ensembles.

CAFÉ CARLYLE
Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—Sept. 15-26: The Broadway star **Kelli O'Hara** ("South Pacific," "Light in the Piazza") takes charge of this intimate, hallowed room.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Sept. 16-20: **Marlena Shaw**, the former R. & B. starlet, is supported by **Sherrie Maricle** and the **Diva Jazz Orchestra.** Sept. 21-22: The pianist and educator **Valerie Capers** leads a quintet.

FEINSTEIN'S AT LOEWS REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Pop goes cabaret once again, as **Jon Secada** hits this tony venue Sept. 15-19.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Sept. 16-20: **Christian McBride**, the most accomplished bassist of his generation, fronts a big band.

(LE) POISSON ROUGE
158 Bleecker St. (212-505-3474)—Sept. 20: The drummer and bandleader **Chico Hamilton** (who turns eighty-eight the day after this gig) has worked with everyone from Lester Young and Gerry Mulligan to Eric Dolphy and Arthur Blythe, and is still going strong.

SMALLS
183 W. 10th St. (212-252-5091)—Sept. 11-12: **Jean-Michel Pilc** is an assertive pianist, and he is served well by a commanding rhythm team, such as the one he has here: the drummer **Billy Hart** and the bassist **François Moutin.**

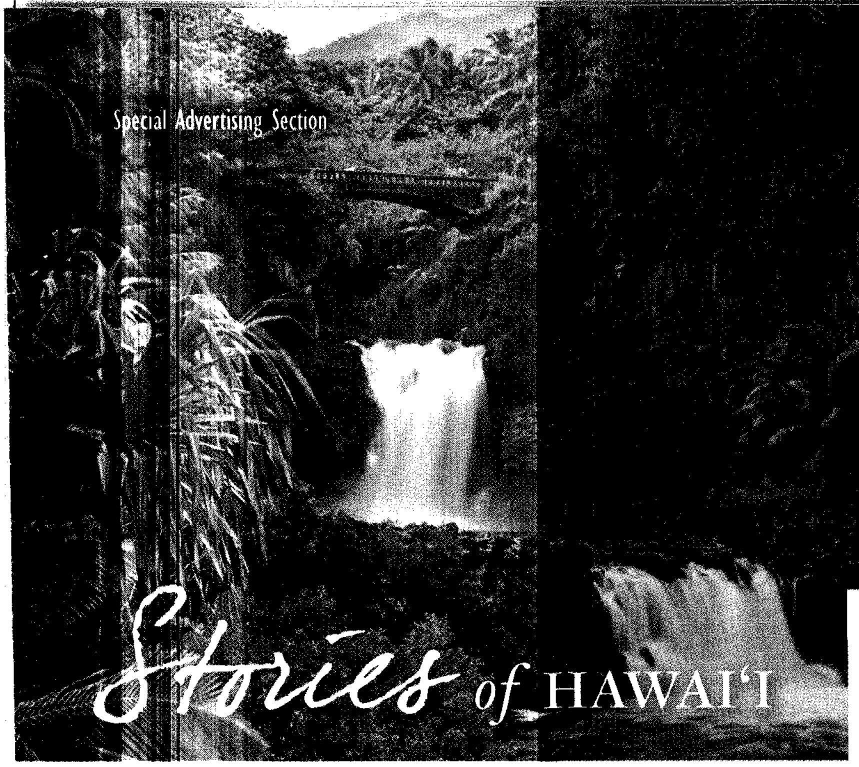
VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Sept. 15-20: Overcoming the weighty expectations imposed by his last name, the saxophonist **Ravi Coltrane**, working with a tight-knit unit fortified by the pianist **Luis Perdomo**, has established himself as a force to be heard.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
RESCUE TEAM

In 1909, most Western ballet was a corny and rather disreputable enterprise. Businessmen went to the ballet to pick up girls. Then Serge Diaghilev brought a group of Russian dancers to Paris and basically saved classical dance. Over the next twenty years, the Ballets Russes became a beacon to Western artists, and Western art a school to the Russians. At City Center Sept. 22-Oct. 3, "Fall for Dance" will honor the Ballets Russes' centenary by showing ballets the company created—Nijinsky's "The Afternoon of a Faun" (performed by Boston Ballet), his sister Bronislava's "Les Biches" (Ballet West), etc.—plus new versions of such famous pieces as Nijinska's "Les Noces" (Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal) and Michel Fokine's "Petrushka" (Basil Twist and his puppets). If you can go to only one program, choose number four, with "Les Biches," Mark Dendy's take on "Faun," and Mark Morris's "Grand Duo," which may be a grandchild of the Ballets Russes' most notorious production, "The Rite of Spring." Remember: "Fall for Dance" tickets go fast, because they cost only ten dollars.

—Joan Acocella

KIRSTEN ULVE



Stories of HAWAI‘I

Music of the Land.

Raised on Maui, award-winning musician Willie K is one of many Hawaiian artists who draw creative inspiration from the natural beauty of the ‘āina or land.

IT'S CALLED CHICKEN SKIN MUSIC in Hawai‘i, a reference to the goose bumps you get when a charismatic artist like Willie Kahaiali‘i (better known as Willie K) picks up his guitar, hunches over the strings, and begins singing. For a beloved native son, a musician favored not just by the locals but also by Hawai‘i-born President Barack Obama, Willie's recent European tour opened yet another door, allowing unique Island sounds to spread far beyond Hawai‘i shores. His performances brought standing ovations from audiences generally fond of booing warm-up acts off the stage.

At home on Maui, the crowds hit Mulligan's on the Blue in Wailea on Wednesday nights just to catch his sets. Inspired by everything from rock-and-roll to jazz, Hawaiian steel guitar, and even the classics, this musical chameleon acquired a style that glides effortlessly from a full Pavarotti tenor to a Patsy Cline contralto to a throaty Jimi Hendrix riff. "Just recently I discovered I could sing opera," he says, only half-kidding.

At the Lāhainā Broiler restaurant way back when, someone said the busboy could sing, and so he could, standing in one night when the band didn't show up. "I only knew 'Beyond the Reef,' 'Little Grass Shack,' and some Gabby Pahinui and Sunday Mānoa songs," says Willie. But inspired by his musician father, Manu Kahaiali‘i, and the family band, Willie started sharing not just his soaring falsetto, but also his stories.

"Auntie Rachel (the manager) gave me a hundred dollar bill," he says. And that did it. "I quit being a busboy."

Willie's other inspiration comes from his Maui roots: the mountains that rise in the distance, or the beach at Lāhainā where he grew up surfing, fishing, and spear diving—often to fetch lunch. "Hawaiians have such an intimate relationship with nature," he says. "Local chants talk about your connection with the birds, the ocean, the way the wind kisses the top of the trees…the older Hawaiians will say, 'Ahhh, now you understand, everything is equal, from a single grain of sand to the highest mountain.' "

Willie has trekked through the mountains with his family. He has walked on the river paths of his ancestors toward the famous ‘Īao Needle, and he has ridden joyously along beach roads astride his wailing motorcycle, guitar strapped across his back, while planning final touches on the recording studio he's building for Maui kids or scoring a whole new album in his head.

"Last night I was driving home and thinking of the kinds of things Dad used to sing, like Tony Bennett, and I was putting Hawaiian words to it. It was highly orchestrated jazz. Really cool," he says. "I know I should be paying attention to the road, but my mind wanders off and I'm creating in all these genres—from pop and heavy metal to jazz and salsa. One side of the brain says, 'Oh, this would be really good for the rock-and-roll part,' while the other says, 'You've gotta make a left turn… .' It's like having a back-seat driver," he kids.

"By the time I arrived, I had a whole album, with orchestration, a little scat, a little bebop—and all in Hawaiian."

–Beverly Creamer

VISIT **GOHAWAII.COM/STORIES** TO EXPERIENCE MORE ABOUT HAWAIIAN MUSIC ON MAUI AND THE ISLANDS.

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: MAUI'S 'O'HEO GULCH IN HANA (SEVEN SACRED POOLS) ©BRUCE IRSCHICK; INSET: COURTESY OF WILLIE K; MAUI SUNSET ©HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY (HTA)/TOR JOHNSON

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Vermeer's Masterpiece 'The Milkmaid.'"** Through Nov. 29. ♦ **"Looking In: Robert Frank's 'The Americans.'"** Opens Sept. 22. ♦ **"Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul."** Through Sept. 20. ♦ **"Augustus Saint-Gaudens in the Metropolitan Museum of Art."** Through Nov. 15. ♦ **"Cinnabar: The Chinese Art of Carved Lacquer."** Call it nature's plastic: Chinese lacquer, which is harvested from *Rhus verniciflua* trees in the south and hardens when exposed to the air, is a remarkable substance. When cinnabar is added, the lacquer turns red; it becomes black with the addition of carbon. The carved objects here, dating from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, include incense boxes, rice measures, stands for tea bowls, and other containers decorated with dragons, lychees, praying mantises, chrysanthemums, and landscape scenes. Many of the motifs are symbolic: the phoenix is a surrogate for the empress; a pomegranate tree signifies fertility. The show's pièce de résistance is a 1777 screen with a scene featuring Guo Ziyi, a Tang-dynasty general who was posthumously elevated to the status of a god. Through Feb. 21. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Monet's Water Lilies."** Through April 12. ♦ **"James Ensor."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"In & Out of Amsterdam: Travels in Conceptual Art, 1960-1976."** Through Oct. 5. ♦ **"Ron Arad: No Discipline."** Through Oct. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Kandinsky."** Opens Sept. 18. ♦ **"Gabriele Münter and Vasily Kandinsky, 1902-14: A Life in Photographs."** Opens Sept. 18. (Open Fridays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Saturday evenings until 7:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3600)—**"Georgia O'Keeffe: Abstraction."** Opens Sept. 17. ♦ **"Dan Graham: Beyond."** Through Oct. 11. ♦ **"Photoconceptualism, 1966-1973."** Through Sept. 20. ♦ **"Sadie Benning: Play Pause."** Through Sept. 20. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Yinka Shonibare MBE."** Through Sept. 20. ♦ **"Patricia Cronin: Harriet Hosmer, Lost and Found."** Through Jan. 24. ♦ **"Reflections in the Electric Mirror: New Feminist Video."** Through Jan. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Extreme Mammals: The Biggest, Smallest, and Most Amazing Mammals of All Time."** Through Jan. 3. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

ASIA SOCIETY
Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—**"Hanging Fire: Contemporary Art from Pakistan."** Through Jan. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS
1040 Grand Concourse (718-681-6000)—**"Intersections: The Grand Concourse Commissions."** Through Jan. 4. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

THE DRAWING CENTER
35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166.)—**"Ree Morton: At the Still Point of the Turning World."** Opens Sept. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

GREY ART GALLERY
100 Washington Sq. E. (212-998-6780)—**"Icons of the Desert: Early Aboriginal Paintings from Papunya."** Papunya was an indigenous community, established by the government in central Australia, where in 1971 a white schoolteacher named Geoffrey Bardon encouraged men versed in ritual painting to translate their process to acrylic on board. (A moving documentary about Bardon's brief tenure in Papunya and its lasting impact plays in the gallery's lower level.) Western viewers will likely jump to a game of compare and contrast. "Stars, Rain, and Lightning at Night" (1971), by Kingsley Tjungurrayi, suggests a Keith Haring; Uta Uta Tjangala's "Medicine Story" (1971) recalls Dubuffet; Charlie Tarawa Tjungurrayi's "Moon Love Dreaming of Man and Woman—Medicine Story" (1971) evokes the mytho-archetypes of Adolph Gottlieb or an early-forties Pollock. But these intricate paintings orbit a mystical sphere of their own. For proof, check the catalogue: a number of pieces are too sacred—too secret—to be reproduced, and their full-page entries are blank where an image would be. Through Dec. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6, Saturdays, 11 to 5, and Wednesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—**"Avedon Fashion 1944-2000."** Through Sept. 20. ♦ **"David Seidner: Paris Fashions, 1945."** Through Sept. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Reinventing Ritual: Contemporary Art and Design for Jewish Life."** Through Feb. 7. ♦ **"Rite Now: Sacred and Secular in Video."** Through Feb. 7. ♦ **"They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust."** Through Oct. 1. (Open Thursdays, and Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Fridays, 11 to 4.)

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM
225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—**"William Blake's World: 'A New Heaven Is Begun.'"** Through Jan. 3. ♦ **"Celebrating Puccini."** Through Jan. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"Focus: Oskar Kokoschka."** Through Oct. 5. ♦ **"Selections from the Permanent Collection."** Through Oct. 5. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM
235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—**"Emory Douglas: Black Panther."** Through Oct. 18. ♦ **"Intersections Intersected: The Photography of David Goldblatt."** Through Oct. 11. ♦ **"Rigo 23: The Deeper They Bury Me, the Louder My Voice Becomes."** Through Oct. 21. ♦ **"Dorothy Iannone: Lioness."** Through Oct. 18. (Open Wednesdays and weekends, noon to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 10.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART
Flushing Meadows-Corona Park (718-592-9700)—**"Tarjama / Translation."** Through Sept. 27. ♦ **"Launch Pad: Johanna Unzueta."** Through Sept. 27. ♦ **"Red Lines Housing Crisis Learning Center."** Through Sept. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—**"Mandala: The Perfect Circle."** Through Jan. 11. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, 11 to 5, Wednesdays, 11 to 7, Fridays, 11 to 10, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

SCULPTURECENTER
44-19 Purves St., Long Island City (718-361-1750)—**"A Voyage of Growth and Discovery: Mike Kelley and Michael Smith."** Through Dec. 30. ♦ **"In Practice Fall 2009."** Through Nov. 29. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Hurvin Anderson."** Through Oct. 25. ♦ **"Artists in Residence: Khalif Kelly, Adam Pendleton, Dawit L. Petros."** Through Oct. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

JACQUES HENRI LARTIGUE
Lartigue's earliest photographs were made at the turn of the last century, when he was a child, and if the excitement, spontaneity, playfulness, and wonder of those pictures were difficult to sustain in his later years, they never entirely disappeared. This exhibition of vintage and early prints might well be the most charming and exhilarating show in town. Included are some of Lartigue's most famous images, along with many more never shown before, nearly all of people in motion: diving, jumping, skating, or simply strolling in the park; in flimsy biplanes, flimsier go-carts, and huge automobiles. Through Oct. 24. (Howard Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010.)

"JACK TWORKOV: AGAINST EXTREMES, FIVE DECADES OF PAINTING"
Tworkov, who died in 1982, has been overshadowed by his heavyweight peers—most notably, Willem de Kooning—but this retrospective, his first in New York, places the New York School painter squarely in the spotlight. Canvases, sketches, and drawings trace his career, from early still-lifes, portraits of fishermen, and card players—à la Cézanne, whom the artist cited as "my origins"—to the mid-career figures, gestural canvases, and late works that privileged geometry and the gray scale. Tworkov also left a paper trail. Journals quoted in the wall labels and displayed in vitrines reveal him writing obsessively, analyzing himself—often, it seems, for posterity. Where his writings of the late fifties show him painting with no "prepared attitude," by 1960 he was bragging to his journal that he'd hit his prime "like a confident boxer." The show may fall short of a T.K.O., but it's still a must-see. Through Oct. 27. (UBS Art Gallery, 1285 Sixth Ave., at 51st St. 212-713-2885.)

Short List

MILTON AVERY: DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-247-2111. Through Oct. 3. **TIM DAVIS:** Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-445-0444. Through Oct. 24. **SARAH MCENEANEY:** De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-262-5050. Opens Sept. 17. **SALLY MANN:** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313. Through Oct. 31. **KARIN SCHNEIDER:** Roth, 160A E. 70th St. 212-717-9067. Opens Sept. 17. **SAUL STEINBERG:** Baumgold, 40 E. 75nd St. 212-861-7340. Through Oct. 17. **CY TWOMBLY:** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313. Through Oct. 31. **"SILENT PICTURES":** James Gallery, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave., at 34th St. 212-817-7138. Through Oct. 11. **"SOMETHING ABOUT MARY":** Gallery Met, Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-799-3100, ext. 2847. Opens Sept. 17.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

SIMEN JOHAN
Johan works the fertile ground between reality and illusion in big color photographs of animals and one spooky, fogbound weeping willow. At nearly six feet by eight feet, the largest of these pictures rival natural-history dioramas, but very little is natural about this menagerie. A deer in a snowy forest is uncannily white; malevolent snakes curl around sticks and one another in a sunny ravine, like fugitives from Dante's Inferno. A pretty little lamb and a magnificent, brooding buffalo sit for more formal portraits that recall Walton Ford's paintings, but Johan undermines even his most convincing fictions, and the nagging sense that something is wrong here keeps viewers just where he wants us: on edge. Through Oct. 31. (Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370.)

LUKE FOWLER / TRIS VONNA-MITCHELL
The yearlong X Initiative, housed in the former Dia building, has mounted some of the best shows

Fashionable confection at The Berkeley's Prêt-à-Portea

ONLY IN LONDON

Taste of the City

London has a flavor all of its own, and taking in its unique attractions—from Hampton Court Palace and the Tate Modern to Portobello Road and West End theatres—works up an appetite. Fortunately, the thriving multicultural city's bustling food markets, afternoon tea spots, and outstanding restaurants can satisfy any craving.

BOUNTIFUL MARKETS

Colorful stalls in the city's eighty food markets proffer everything from fresh vegetables and exotic spices to seafood plucked from coastal waters. **Borough Market**, on the south side of the Thames, is London's oldest and among its largest. Open Thursday through Saturday, visitors can sample delicacies from across the U.K. and the continent. Centrally located near the Bond and Baker street tube stations, the **Marylebone Farmers' Market** (Sundays only) is a favorite with locavores and most of its goods are organic.

FARE WITH FLAIR

London's culinary reputation has soared along with its growing constellation of Michelin-starred restaurants, which numbered forty-nine at last count. Yet it needn't cost a king's ransom to dine well here thanks to budget-friendly lunch deals, prix-fix menus, and festival fare.

LONDON RESTAURANT FESTIVAL This first-ever citywide dining celebration takes place from October 8th through the 13th. Highlights include an opening lecture by the historian Simon Schama; a culinary tour of London's top restaurants led by a well-known chef or food critic; and a game show in which New York and London chefs match wits.

Celebrated chef Jamie Oliver recently opened his **Canary Wharf** Italian eaterie, another in his chain of affordable Italian restaurants. And pre- and post-theatre menus at D&D's **Almeida**, which serves modern French-accented cuisine, provide three courses for less than thirty-five dollars.

Those who yearn for an authentic British meal are well served at **Roast** in Borough Market. Its traditional fare—roast beef, puddings, and local cheeses such as crumbly Dorset blue vinny—along with an impressive menu of aged, blended, and single-malt whiskeys will satisfy even the most Churchillian appetite.

LONDON IS YOUR CUP OF TEA

A classic London experience, afternoon tea is the civilized break between day and evening plans. Sweets that accompany the beverage have been elevated to an art form in opulent tea salons at the city's great hotels: the specialty in the Dorchester's gilded **Promenade** is a caramel boat with apricot filling and a chocolate sail. **Bijoux Tea** in the Palm Court at The Langham features edible gems inspired by Asprey diamonds, Baccarat crystal, and Chanel pearls. Pastries at **Prêt-à-Portea** in The Berkeley mimic the latest season's fashions.

Ranked "Top London Afternoon Tea 2009" by the United Kingdom Tea Council, the **English Tea Room** at Brown's Hotel offers "tea-torials" led by its head pastry chef that reveal the secrets to making its award-winning scones. And at **St. James's Restaurant** in the venerable Fortnum & Mason, vegetarian, gluten-free, and diabetic-friendly selections are available and complement teas from around the world vetted by Fortnum's dedicated tea taster.

To plan your ONLY IN LONDON vacation, go to VISITLONDON.COM.

IMAGE COURTESY OF VISIT LONDON

ENTER TO WIN AN AMAZING ONLY IN LONDON VACATION

Winter in London is a magical time of year, full of holiday surprises. Enter for a chance to win an **ONLY IN LONDON** vacation, including round-trip airfare, hotel, and special events. Prize includes the following Only in London experiences.

- A NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER CRUISE ON THE THAMES
  Enjoy the last hours of 2009 with a spectacular evening cruise including all the amazing food and wine, live entertainment, and unrivalled views of London that Bateaux London's cruises have to offer. At midnight, welcome in the New Year with a celebratory glass of champagne and experience the capital's iconic fireworks display. **bateauxlondon.com**

- A V.I.P. PASS TO HYDE PARK WINTER WONDERLAND
  Experience the dazzling festivities in style. Skate on London's largest outdoor ice rink, ride the Giant Observation Wheel, and use your complimentary tokens for many other attractions. **hydeparkwinterwonderland.com**

- A PRIVATE VISIT TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS
  Get exclusive access to the galleries and a private visit to the "Wild Thing: Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska, Gill" exhibit—and take home a catalogue as a memento of this unique experience. **royalacademy.org.uk**

- A DAY TRIP ON EUROSTAR
  Visit Paris in just two hours and fifteen minutes—and when you return to St. Pancras International Train Station celebrate with complimentary bubbly at Europe's longest champagne bar. **eurostar.com**

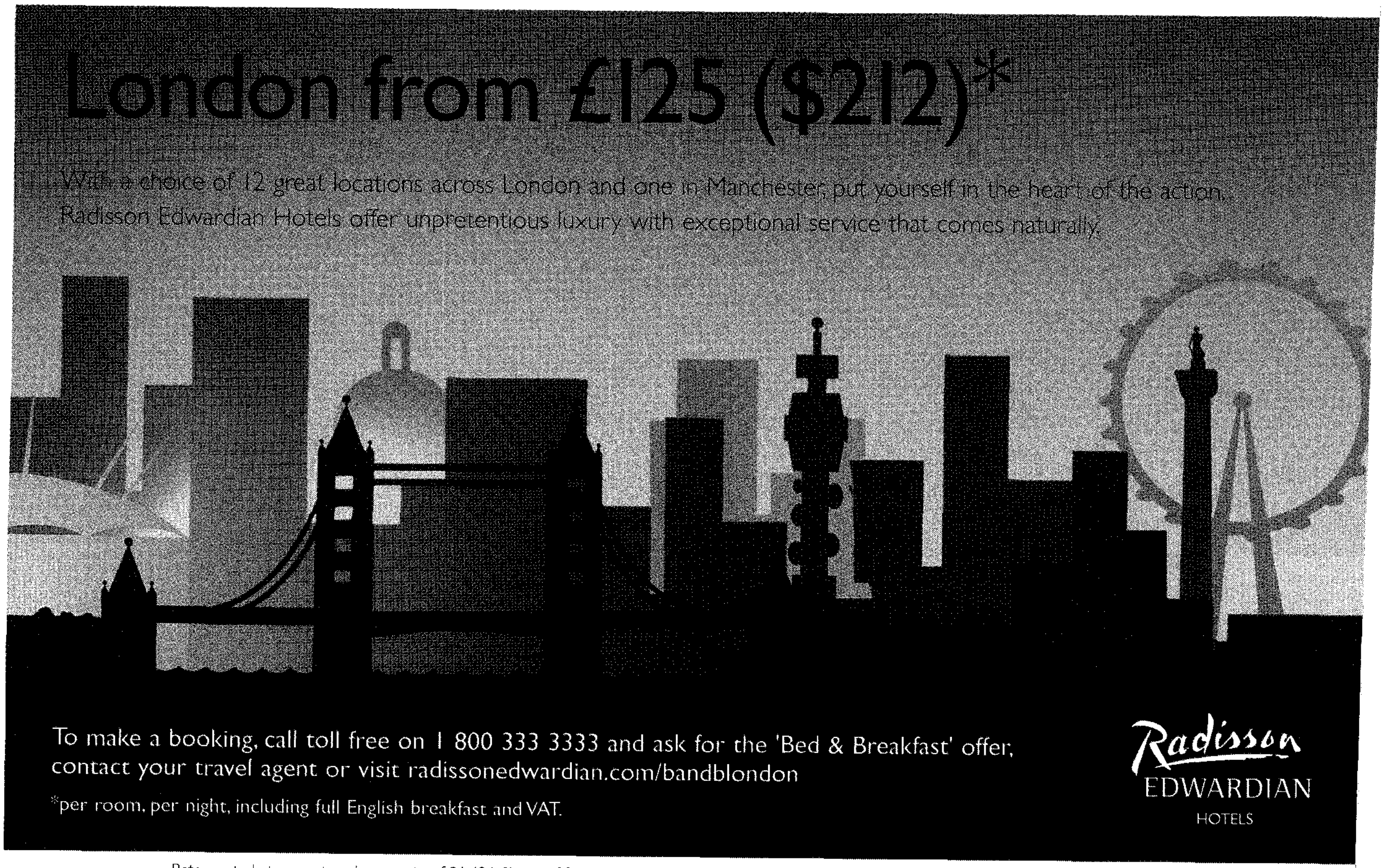
- A CHAMPAGNE FLIGHT ON THE LONDON EYE
  Enjoy a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne served by your host while you take in amazing views of the capital. **londoneye.com**

- A V.I.P. TOUR OF WEMBLEY STADIUM
  Enjoy a personal behind-the-scenes tour of Wembley Stadium, one of the most famous stadiums in the world and the home of English football. The tour is led by one of the best guides in London and includes a photo op of the replica Football Association Cup and a goody bag. **wembleystadium.com/tours**

- A LUXURY CELEBRITY TOUR OF LONDON
  Enjoy a chauffeur-driven, three-hour tour of London's most glamorous celebrity homes, famous film locations, music landmarks, and pop culture history. **thecelebrityplanet.com**

To enter the ONLY IN LONDON contest and for full terms and conditions, go to visitlondon.com.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY to enter or win. You must be a legal resident of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia and over the age of 21 to enter. Entries must be received by 11:59 P.M. E.S.T. on November 19, 2009. Sponsored by Visit London.



London from £125 ($212)*

With a choice of 12 great locations across London and one in Manchester, put yourself in the heart of the action. Radisson Edwardian Hotels offer unpretentious luxury with exceptional service that comes naturally.

To make a booking, call toll free on 1 800 333 3333 and ask for the 'Bed & Breakfast' offer, contact your travel agent or visit radissonedwardian.com/bandblondon

*per room, per night, including full English breakfast and VAT.

Radisson EDWARDIAN HOTELS

Rate quoted at current exchange rate of $1.696:£1 as at 08.05.09 and are for comparative purposes only, vary by hotel, season and are subject to availability. Rates are paid in British pound sterling. Rates displayed are valid between 12.18.09 - 03.31.10 and weekends only (Friday, Saturday & Sunday), mid-week rates also available. Cancellations can be made up to 4pm day of arrival (GMT) without penalty. Cancellations after 4pm or no shows will result in one night's charge.

in Chelsea this year, and its winning streak continues. Fowler, a Glaswegian, exalts the fringes of culture in films that profile a post-punk musician (Xentos "Fray Bentos" Jones, who founded the Homosexuals, a band that never released an album) and the avant British composer Cornelius Cardew. New and found footage, stills, and animation are combined with interviews, in which talking heads are replaced by headless torsos (speakers' faces are out of the frame) reinforcing the idea of voices at the margins. Vonna-Mitchell, an Englishman based in Germany, favors old televisions and slide projectors. The audio accompanying his images is a winding narrative delivered rapid-fire in a patois of rap, spoken-word, and Cockney poetry. For both artists, obsolete technologies and faded histories become vehicles for brave new forms of art. Through Oct. 24. (548 W. 22nd St. 917-697-4886.)

HELLEN VAN MEENE

The Dutch photographer shows portraits of girls and some boys made over the past two years in Russia, the Netherlands, New York, and on a trip through the American South. Like her previous work with children and adolescents, these new pictures are intriguing blends of naturalism and artifice. Because many of Van Meene's female subjects look like they're playing dress-up in abandoned rooms, her work echoes Francesca Woodman's dreamy self-portraiture and the grunge fashion photographs of Corinne Day and Lise Sarfati. But its staginess is softened by a genuine concern. Encouraged to express themselves, van Meene's kids can be touchingly self-conscious or self-possessed, but they're all wonderfully complicated works in progress. Opens Sept. 17. (Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.)

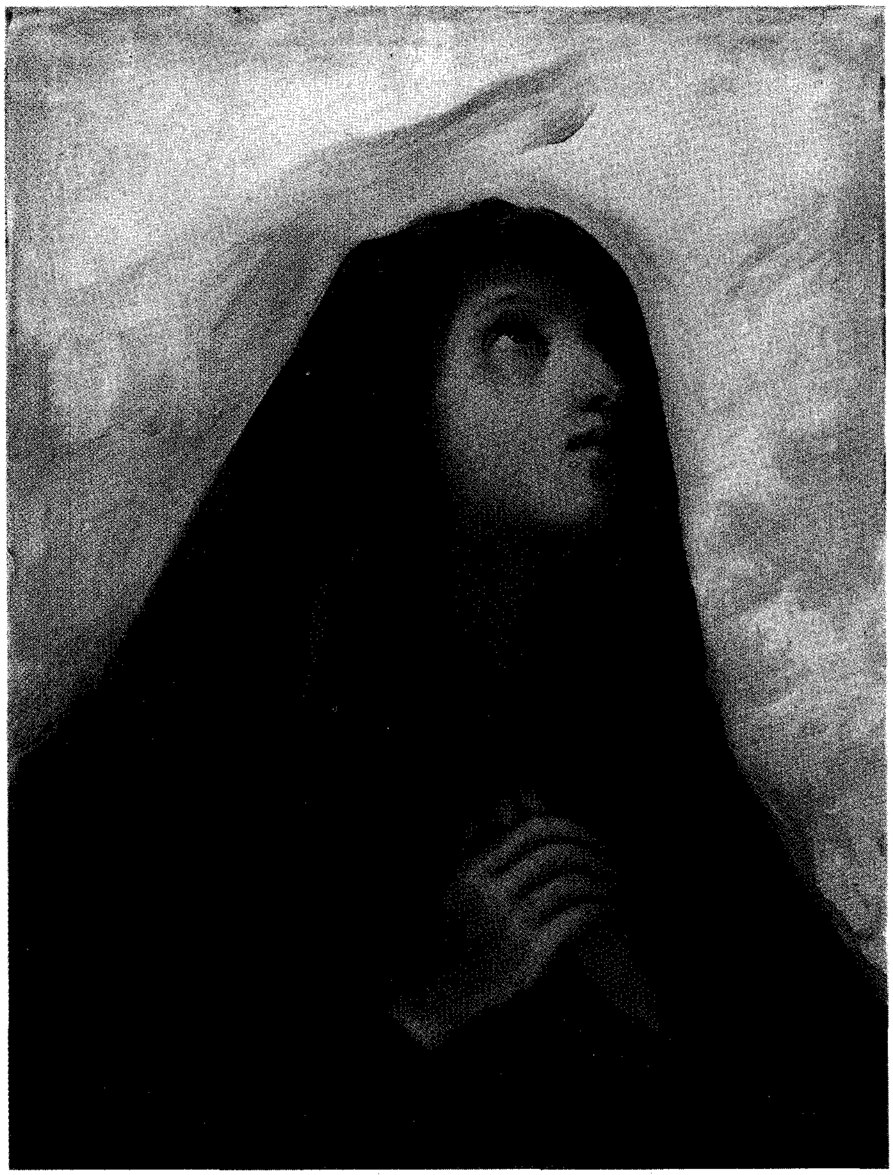
Short List

JANINE ANTONI: Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100. Through Oct. 24. **ALEX BAG:** Dee, 545 W. 20th St. 212-924-7545. Opens Sept. 17. **MARK BRADFORD / KARA WALKER:** Sikkema Jenkins, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262. Through Oct. 17. **TROY BRAUNTUCH:** Petzel, 537 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467. Through Oct. 17. **TOM BURR:** Bortolami, 510 W. 25th St. 212-727-2050. Through Oct. 24. **RAOUL DE KEYSER:** Zwirner, 533 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Through Oct. 24. **ORLY GENGER:** Goldston, 530 W. 25th St. 212-206-7887. Through Oct. 24. **JOANNE GREENBAUM:** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460. Through Oct. 31. **MAYA LIN:** Pace Wildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-989-4258. Through Oct. 24. **JOSIAH MCELHENY:** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000. Through Oct. 17. **JILL MAGID:** Lambert, 550 W. 21st St. 212-242-3611. Through Oct. 24. **CHRIS OFILI:** David Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Through Oct. 24. **JAMES TURRELL:** Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000. Through Oct. 17. **REBECCA WARREN:** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200. Through Oct. 24. **MATTHEW WEINSTEIN:** Nitsch, 534 W. 22nd St. 212-645-2030. Through Oct. 17. **"ONE MINUTE MORE":** The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Through Oct. 31.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

DAVIS RHODES

Rhodes's solo début in New York is as glib as it is irresistible. Monochrome banners, made of enamel paint on clear vinyl, are embellished in the center in three different ways: the numeral "1," a slack hole (where a "1" was cut out), or a hand extending its index finger (evoking both "We're No. 1" and the "index" or trace of a brushstroke). Rhodes flaunts his painting bona fides, with allusions to Greenbergian flatness, hard-edged abstraction, the Pop numerals of Robert Indiana, the slash paintings of Lucio Fontana, and the irreverent minimalism of Blinky Palermo. He even folds in graffiti; the enamel is spray paint, and the titles come right off the cans ("Pink Lemonade #1," Totally Tangerine Hand"). The over-all effect is as bright and inflated as a bubblegum bubble—with an impact that's about as long-lasting. Through Oct. 3. (Team, 83 Grand St. 212-279-9219.)



A painting by Julian Schnabel, in "Something About Mary," at Gallery Met.

© JULIAN SCHNABEL, JULIAN SCHNABEL STUDIO

Short List

TAUBA AUERBACH: Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St. 212-343-7300. Through Oct. 17. **CARTER:** Salon 94 Freemans, 1 Freeman Alley. 212-529-7400. Through Oct. 24. **RACHEL FOULLON:** Beauchene, 163 Eldridge St. 212-375-8043. Through Oct. 18. **ALEX KATZ:** Peter Blum, 99 Wooster St. 212-343-0441. Through Oct. 24. **GENESIS BREYER P-ORRIDGE:** Invisible Exports, 14A Orchard St. 212-226-5447. Through Oct. 18. **ADAM PUTNAM:** Taxter & Spengemann, 123 E. 12th St. 212-924-0212. Through Oct. 17. **SARA GREENBERGER RAFFERTY:** Uffner, 47 Orchard St. 212-274-0064. Through Oct. 3. **JACOB ROBICHAUX:** Museum 52, at 4 E. 2nd St. 347-789-7072. Through Oct. 10. **KEHINDE WILEY:** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 212-343-7300. Through Sept. 26.

DANCE

MIGUEL GUTIERREZ AND THE POWERFUL PEOPLE

In Gutierrez's new work, "Last Meadow," a trio of committed and compelling performers act out scenes from James Dean's films, doubling roles, rewinding and replaying sections, and verbalizing close readings of the actor's histrionics. It's a mishmash, but the kind in which seemingly random comments, spoken out of character, turn out to be thematically relevant. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Sept. 15-19 at 7:30.)

"IN-I"

This piece, directed and performed by Akram Khan and the actress Juliette Binoche, is a dialogue about love using movement, and it's ultimately closer to one of Binoche's explorations of troubled relationships than to a pure dance piece. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Sept. 15 and Sept. 17-19 at 7:30, Sept. 16 at 7, and Sept. 20 at 3. Through Sept. 26.)

"GROOVALOO"

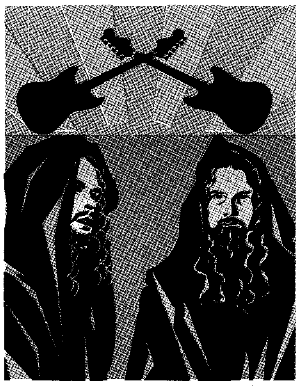
While the diversity of the cast of this touring production speaks to hip-hop's vast be-yourself appeal, the disappointing level of skill and imagination suggests dilution. Save for a few flashes of B-boy brilliance, this is hip-hop lite. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Sept. 15-16 and Sept. 22 at 7:30, Sept. 17-18 at 8, Sept. 19 at 2 and 8, and Sept. 20 at 2 and 7:30. Through Sept. 27.)

LUCY GUERIN INC.

Of the two works by the Australian choreographer coming to New York this fall, "Corridor" is the narrower one, both in concept and impact. Guerin places her dancers in a passageway created

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
SUNN, HERE IT COMES

Sunn O))), an aggressive guitar band, is in the business of low-pitched noise. Really low—guitars normally tuned to E are tuned down to B or A. The band's founding members, Stephen O'Malley and Greg Anderson, have seen their work described as "drone" and "doom metal," though neither fully explains Sunn O))) (the "O)))" is silent). A typical track begins with two guitars striking chords in unison and letting them sustain; Sunn O))) celebrates the beauty of amplification and the range of physical responses low frequencies produce. Sunn O)))'s basic show involves two men in hooded robes manipulating guitars amidst the output of several smoke machines. But for their appearance at the Brooklyn Masonic Temple on Sept. 22, the duo is expanding to a four-piece unit and using synthesizers and a vocalist to replicate the sound of "Monoliths & Dimensions," their fantastic new album. The Masonic Temple isn't subject to the same rules as commercial music venues. If Sunn O))) decide to push their music past 120 decibels, only a higher force will be able to stop them.



KIM DEMARCO

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*

by two rows of viewers who are facing each other and gives them instructions via cell phones and out loud. The disjointed, eccentric movement vocabulary she chooses adds to the sense of an improv exercise in chic alienation. The use she makes of some fabulous paper coats is more inspired, though the most eloquent responses are to the most impossible instructions ("Put an end to world hunger," etc.): the dancers barely move at all. (Baryshnikov Arts Center, 450 W. 37th St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 16 and Sept. 18-19 at 6:30 and 8:30, Sept. 17 at 8:30, and Sept. 20 at 5.)

BILL YOUNG / COLLEEN THOMAS & CO.
Last year, the pair of choreographers transformed their SoHo loft into a through-the-looking-glass site for quick-cut vignettes: love scenes, random anecdotes, knockabout comedy. The extroverted cast danced all over the space, all over each other, and up the walls. Now, with "Life (In Progress) II," the festivities move to Dance New Amsterdam's theatre, retrofitted as a seventies loft party. Jason Somma's live video provides closeups as well as access to offstage happenings. (280 Broadway, at Chambers St. 212-625-8369. Sept. 16-19 at 8.)

COMPAGNIE NACERA BELAZA
Presented by Danspace Project and the French Institute Alliance Française (as part of the "Crossing the Line" festival), "Le Cri" is a serious exercise in minimalism. The Algerian choreographer and her sister, dressed identically, their bare feet planted on the floor, worry a torso twist like melancholic fitness maniacs. Eventually, as variation creeps in and the sisters go out of synch, they resemble one of Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker's phase studies. The music shifts from Nina Simone to Amy Winehouse, the lights turn on and off, and the release—call it spiritual if you will—is all too brief given the buildup. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 866-811-4111. Sept. 17-19 at 7:30.)

"LOOKING FOR JOSEPHINE"
Jérôme Savary's tribute to Josephine Baker, like the Black Venus herself, has charmed Parisian audiences. Structured as a search for a Baker substitute in post-Katrina New Orleans, the revue (part of Montclair State University's "Peak Performances" series) attempts to encompass not just La Revue Nègre but the birth of jazz, all from a perspective of French Negrophilia that, like the celebrated expatriate, hasn't always played well over here. Still, there's a charm in the way that the New Jersey-born Nicolle Rochelle tries to get comfortable in the banana skirt, and the superlative American hoofers Kendrick Jones and Jason Rodgers insure that tap dancing is ably represented. (Alexander Kasser, 1 Normal Ave., Montclair, N.J. 973-655-5112. Sept. 17-18 at 7:30, Sept. 19 at 8, and Sept. 20 at 3. Through Sept. 27.)

COBU/"EN"
Wild-haired and bursting with energy, the all-female, all-Japanese troupe COBU rocks out to the beat of taiko drums and their own furiously tapping feet. The group's founder, Yako Miyamoto, is a longtime cast member of "Stomp," and she has conceived "EN" as a kind of Japanese-flavored spinoff of that show: hip-hop meets tap meets martial arts. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 212-352-3101. Sept. 17 at 8, Sept. 18-19 at 3 and 8, and Sept. 20 at 3 and 7.)

"FALL FOR DANCE"
This year, the democratic dance festival (it's only ten dollars per ticket) pays tribute to the legacy of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, with performances of Nijinska's rarely seen "Les Biches," by Ballet West; the gender-bending Art Nouveau gem "Le Spectre de la Rose," by the Australian Ballet; and a new interpretation of Ravel's "Bolero," by Ohad Naharin. In addition, the radical tapper Savion Glover will offer an homage to John Coltrane; the Martha Graham Dance Company will perform one of Graham's loveliest pieces, "Diversion of Angels"; and two dancers from Christopher Wheeldon's Morphoses will tangle in a duet by Lightfoot León. For a complete schedule, see www.nycitycenter.org. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Sept. 22 at 8. Through Oct. 3.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
CONCERTS IN TOWN

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Tradition and novelty cross paths in the first night of the 2009-10 season: a new production of **"Tosca,"** a début for the director Luc Bondy, who will have to work hard to erase the memories of the Franco Zeffirelli staging, one of his finest for the Met. Karita Mattila sings the role of the *prima donna assoluta*, with two formidable males, the tenor Marcelo Álvarez (as Cavaradossi) and the bass-baritone Juha Uusitalo (as Scarpia), competing for her loyalty; James Levine, the rock of the company, conducts. (Sept. 21 at 6:30.) ♦ Few of the Met's productions have been more reliably successful than Jonathan Miller's go at **"Le Nozze di Figaro,"** but this run will be full of débuts: those of Emma Bell (in the role of the Countess) and the Israeli conductor Dan Ettinger, as well as the house role débuts of Danielle de Niese (Susanna) and Isabel Leonard (Cherubino). Figaro and the Count are in the trusty hands of John Relyea and Bo Skovhus. (Sept. 22 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

DOWNTOWN MUSIC PRODUCTIONS: "THE CRADLE WILL ROCK"
The era of Herbert Hoover has been replaced by the age of Bernie Madoff, which makes a new revival of Marc Blitzstein's scabrous chamber-music-theatre piece about capitalist perfidy—Larry Foreman vs. Mr. Mister—exceptionally appropriate. (Kurt Weill was a big influence.) Mimi Stern-Wolfe's hardy company offers four performances at the 45 Bleecker Street Theatre. (45 Bleecker St. Sept. 21-24 at 8. For ticket information, visit www.brownpapertickets.com.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Alan Gilbert's superb professionalism and affable, uncomplicated persona are obvious to any observer, but his chance to prove himself as an interpretive musician—at the highest level—is finally at hand. His opening-night program as the twenty-fifth music director of the New York Philharmonic is an unexpected one: the world première of "Expo," by the eminent Finnish composer Magnus Lindberg; Renée Fleming lending her radiant soprano not to Verdi or Mozart but to Messiaen's "Poèmes pour Mi"; and, only then, the repertory standard "Symphonie Fantastique," by Berlioz. (Sept. 16 at 7:30.) ♦ Gilbert proceeds to more typical (though very challenging) symphonic fare by conducting the orchestra, the mezzo-soprano Petra Lang, the Women of the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and the American Boychoir in Mahler's Third Symphony. (Sept. 17 and Sept. 22 at 7:30 and Sept. 18 at 2.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

AMERICAN CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA
Vladimir Feltsman, known for his sober and thoughtful playing on modern pianos, makes his first appearance with a period-instrument orchestra, performing Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27 on a newly commissioned fortepiano that was modelled on Mozart's own instrument. The concert also offers Beethoven's Seventh Symphony; Thomas Crawford conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. www.aconyc.org. Sept. 17 at 8.)

RECITALS

THE MANDALA CONCERT
The Rubin Museum of Art, devoted to Himalayan art and culture, offers musical events that are in sympathy with the aesthetic of its collections. In coördination with the exhibition "Mandala: The Perfect Circle," it presents a concert collaboration between the composer Joel Thome and the artist Harry Doolittle, both of whom have been inspired by the exquisite geometrical unities

of the mandala form. The enterprising musicians involved include the flutist Linda Wetherill and the Scorchio String Quartet. (150 W. 17th St. 212-620-5000. Sept. 16 at 7.)

"SACRED MUSIC IN A SACRED SPACE": KENT TRITLE
Tritle's always ambitious series of concerts at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola will present a sequence of major works for chorus and orchestra this season, but he will begin with a more modest offering—a solo organ recital, in which the admired soloist offers music by Bach, Buxtehude, Mendelssohn, and the French Romantic Félix-Alexandre Guilmant. (Park Ave. at 84th St. 212-288-2520. Sept. 16 at 7:30.)

BARGEMUSIC
This week, three big chunks of classics at the floating chamber-music series. Sept. 16 at 8: Michael Bulychev-Okser continues a fall series devoted to the Beethoven piano sonatas with performances of the Sonatas No. 2 in A Major, No. 10 in G Major, No. 18 in E-Flat Major, and No. 26 in E-Flat Major ("Les Adieux"). ♦ Sept. 18 at 8: All six of Bach's French Suites, performed by the barge's incisive and versatile house pianist, Steven Beck. ♦ Sept. 19 at 8 and Sept. 20 at 3: Three more barge regulars—the violinist Mark Peskanov, the cellist Nicholas Cannelakis, and the pianist Olga Vinokur—offer favorite piano trios by Haydn (the "Gypsy"), Shostakovich, and Schubert (No. 2 in E-Flat Major). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

"CONCERTS IN THE HEIGHTS"
Got horn? The doughty little Washington Heights series begins festively with an evening that highlights the talents of the hornist Karl Kramer, who with string-playing friends performs courtly European music by Danzi, Duvernoy, and others. (Fort Washington Collegiate Church, Fort Washington Ave. at 181st St. Sept. 17 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

"INTERPRETATIONS" SERIES: ADAM RUDOLPH/YUSEF LATEEF
Thomas Buckner's essential downtown experimental-music series gets off to a grand start with an evening devoted mostly to new music by Lateef, the jazz and world-music legend, who will soon celebrate his eighty-ninth birthday. Petr Kotik conducts the S.E.M. Ensemble in the Concerto for Percussion, written for the percussionist Adam Rudolph; Buckner, a baritone, is the soloist in "A Syllogism" and in Rudolph's "Nightsky." (Roulette, 20 Greene St. 212-219-8242. Sept. 17 at 8.)

THE KITCHEN
In a good week for edgy music, the Kitchen begins its performance series with a concert featuring two "bandsembles" that mix the folk and experimental idioms: Matthew Welch's Blarvuster and Electric Kulintang, a collaborative effort by the percussionists Susie Ibarra and Roberto Rodriguez. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793, ext. 11. Sept. 17-18 at 8.)

COUNTER)INDUCTION: "FINIS TERRAE"
The new-music collective opens its season with a concert at the Tenri Cultural Institute that explores how composers have treated cosmic questions. Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time" is a natural anchor for a program that also includes pieces by Henryk Górecki ("Genesis I") and Mohammed Fairouz; the expert musicians include the violinist Miranda Cuckson, the clarinettist Benjamin Fingland, and the pianist Steven Beck. (43A W. 13th St. Sept. 19 at 8. A donation is suggested.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS
The eccentric but valuable Jens Nygaard tribute ensemble offers a short history of German Romanticism in its latest program, in which works by Schumann and Weber (the Trio in G Minor for Flute, Cello, and Piano) are followed by an early work by Mahler, the one-movement Piano Quartet, and the String Quartet in C Minor by his friend Hans Rott, a brilliant but mentally ill composer whose music had a considerable influence on Mahler's symphonic style. The ensemble's guests include the violinist Misha Vitenson (from the Amernet Quartet) and the violist Cynthia Phelps (principal at the New York Philharmonic). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 212-799-1259. Sept. 21 at 2 and 7:30.)

MOVIES OPENING

BRIGHT STAR
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Sept. 16 (in limited release) and Sept. 18 (in wide release).

THE BURNING PLAIN
In this drama, directed by Guillermo Arriaga, a troubled woman changes her identity and seeks to revisit her past. Starring Kim Basinger and Charlize Theron. Opening Sept. 18. (In wide release.)

CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
An animated comedy, adapted from the book by Ron and Judi Barrett, about an attempt to solve world hunger that goes awry. Directed by Chris Miller and Phil Lord; with the voices of Bill Hader, Anna Faris, and James Caan. Opening Sept. 18. (In wide release.)

DISGRACE
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Sept. 18. (In limited release.)

THE INFORMANT!
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Sept. 18. (In wide release.)

JENNIFER'S BODY
Karyn Kusama directed this horror film, starring Megan Fox as a cheerleader who is possessed by a demon. Opening Sept. 18. (In wide release.)

LOVE HAPPENS
In this romantic comedy, Aaron Eckhart stars as a widower whose self-help book on grief makes him a celebrity. Directed by Brandon Camp; co-starring Jennifer Aniston. Opening Sept. 18. (In wide release.)

PARIS
Cédric Klapisch directed this romantic drama, about a dancer (Romain Duris) who, while awaiting a heart transplant, keeps an eye on other people's affairs. Co-starring Juliette Binoche and Fabrice Luchini. In French. Opening Sept. 18. (IFC Center.)

THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN AMERICA: DANIEL ELLSBERG AND THE PENTAGON PAPERS
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Sept. 16. (Film Forum.)

35 SHOTS OF RUM
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Sept. 16. (Film Forum.)

NOW PLAYING

AMERICAN CASINO
The husband-and-wife team of Leslie (director and writer) and Andrew (writer) Cockburn, veterans of many documentaries on arms policy and nuclear weapons, have finally made a movie about a nuclear disaster that actually happened—their subject is the social ecology of the recent financial meltdown. They filmed interviews with bankers, financial commentators, and homeowners suffering foreclosure, and pulled together sorrowful footage of stable neighborhoods—both prosperous and working class—slipping into dereliction, with junk-laden yards, boarded-up doorways, and squatters taking control of abandoned houses and charging rent to the homeless. And they make the necessary connections: it turns out that what happened at Bear Stearns and Goldman Sachs affected such things as the mosquito levels in Riverside County, California (the insects breed with fecundity in abandoned swimming pools). The highlight of the film is a long interview with a former banker at Bear Stearns who explains with great precision how collateralized debt obligations work, a piece of chicanery so preposterous that one doesn't know whether to weep or set off a bomb on Wall Street.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 9/7/09.) (Film Forum.)

THE BAADER MEINHOF COMPLEX
The Red Army Faction, a left-wing terrorist group founded in Germany in 1970, was referred to by the public—though not by the members themselves—as the Baader Meinhof Gang. This historical drama, directed by Uli Edel and based on the book of the same name by Stefan Aust, takes us scrupulously through the heyday of the group, in the nineteen-seventies, each deed more brazen and brutal than the last: the bombing of a newspaper office, the daylight murders of prominent German citizens, the siege of an embassy in Stockholm, the hijacking of a Lufthansa jet, and so forth. The director's moral mission to lay out the full saga clashes awkwardly with the aesthetic imperative to keep it tight, but it's hard to resist being plunged afresh into this engulfing age of European anxiety. The parents of Gudrun Ensslin (Johanna Wokalek)—at once the most appealing and the most unbending of the R.A.F.'s inner circle—provide the burning, unexpected heart of the film. Their suggestion, in response to her trial, of the spiritual roots of political extremism is something to ponder. Yet once you learn that Hanns Martin Schleyer (Bernd Stegemann), whom the R.A.F. kidnaps and executes in the final act of the story, was not only a businessman but, in a former life, an officer in the S.S., the movie's warning rings clear: the pressures of history can be hard to bear.—*Anthony Lane* (8/31/09) (In limited release.)

DISGRACE
In adapting J. M. Coetzee's celebrated 1999 novel, the screenwriter Anna Maria Monticelli and the director Steve Jacobs (who are husband and wife) have tried to create a visual tone analogous to his extraordinary prose—dry, spare, abruptly violent. The movie, shot in South Africa and Australia, is skillful and tense, and the landscapes are magnificent, but the implacable rhythm of Coetzee's sentences, which makes the book impossible to put down, escapes the filmmakers, and would probably escape any filmmakers. John Malkovich is the played-out literature professor who is fired from a Cape Town university for sleeping with an undergraduate; the wonderful South African actress Jessica Haines is his tough-souled daughter who lives deep in the country and takes him in. In the wake of the violence that ensues, the movie, like the book, poses several key questions: Who shall control the land of South Africa? Who will be the country's children? With Eriq Ebouaney as the black South African who shares the daughter's homestead.—*D.D.* (In limited release.)

DISTRICT 9
This is the first feature from Neill Blomkamp, who sets it in his native Johannesburg—taking the ethnic tensions and economic inequalities that already exist there and throwing a fresh, unexpected irritant into the mix. For the first few minutes, the movie sounds and looks like a documentary, with a fidgety office worker called Wikus Van De Merwe (Sharlto Copley) discussing the relocation of aliens. We presume that this is bureaucratic shorthand for unwanted immigrants, and so, in a way, it is; but these are real aliens, from outer space—graceless, snarling bipeds known as "prawns." The wrath and suspicion they provoke among humans feel horribly familiar, and Blomkamp doesn't need to highlight the moral of his tale; instead, he quickens it into a bloody game of hide-and-seek, with Wikus himself becoming a disfigured outcast and, against all his instincts, seeking the aid of a prawn. Like the aliens browsing through refuse for weaponry and food, the film trawls for visual tactics of every kind, from news footage to clips from security cameras, and the result is: a startling, redoubtable thriller constructed on the cheap from a decaying world.—*A.L.* (9/14/09) (In wide release.)

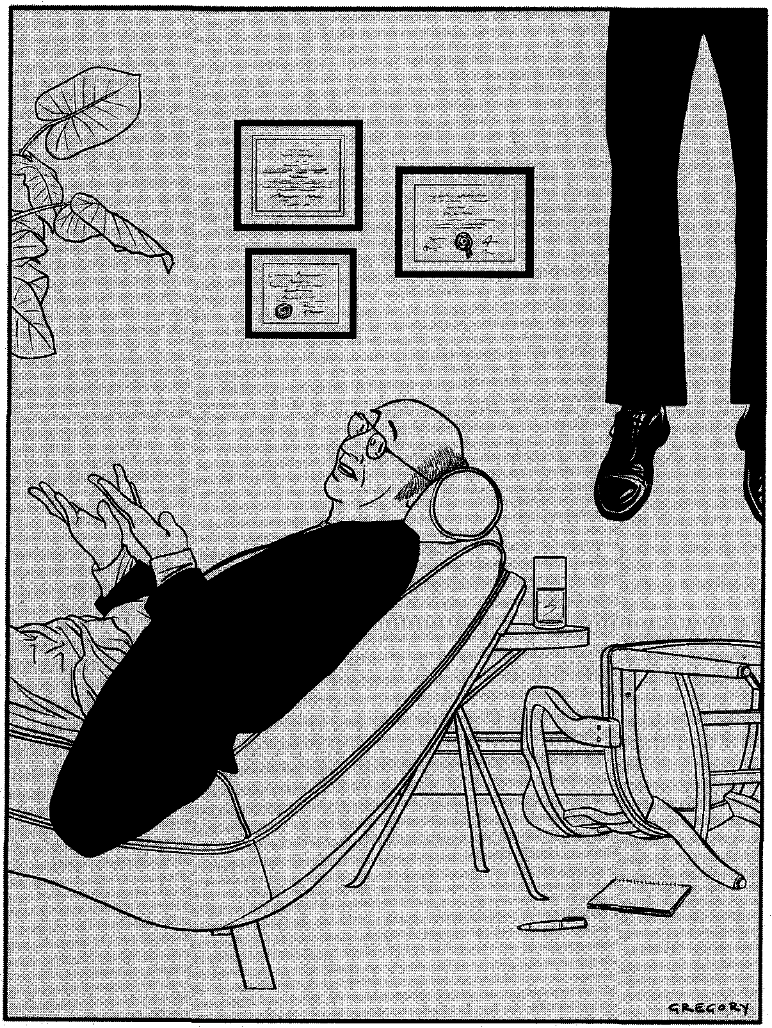
FILMS BY LOUIS AND AUGUSTE LUMIÈRE
Made between 1895 and 1898, these brief, unedited strips may not be the first films, but they are the first art films—specifically, works of Impressionism. The various subjects, including workers leaving the Lumière factory, a table of card players, a rowboat plying jagged ocean waves beneath the gaze of silhouetted women on the dock, even the staged comedy of a gardener splashed with his own hose, preserve the settings, gestures, styles, and dappled light immortalized by the painters of modern life. But most of all, the brothers, in recording the first acts of cinematic self-consciousness, went Impressionism one better. If new technologies take hold through their power to simulate a miracle, the Lumière broth-

ADVERTISEMENT

Curb Your Enthusiasm® Caption Winner

In anticipation of the new season of "**Curb Your Enthusiasm**," readers recently submitted a caption for a chance to win a signed print of the illustration below plus a full set of **"Curb Your Enthusiasm"** DVDs.

THE WINNING CAPTION

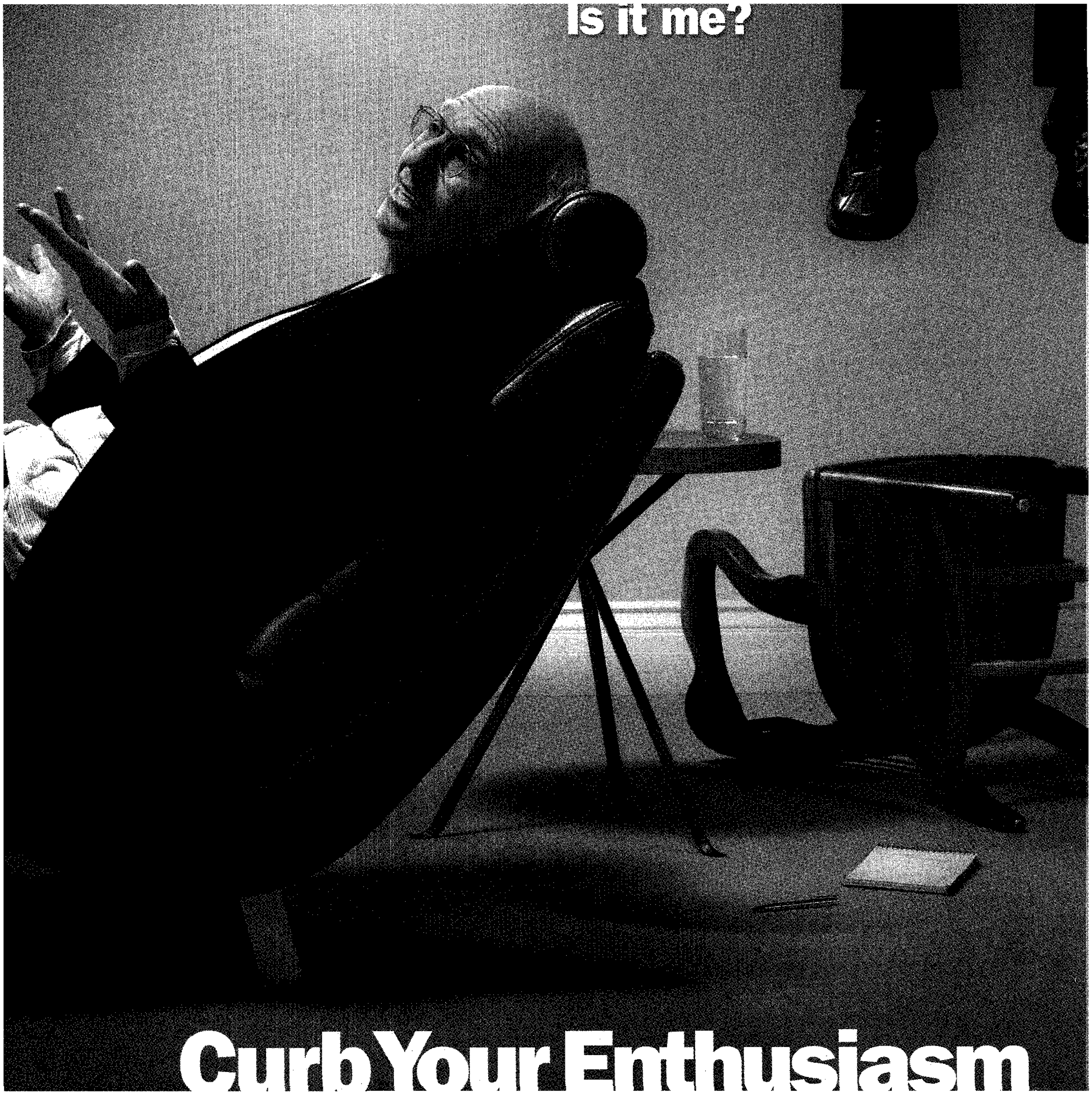


"I've gotta say...I'm feeling pretty good. Pretty, pretty, pretty good."

Michael Sokol, Ithaca, New York

Artwork © 2009 Home Box Office, Inc. All rights reserved. HBO and related service marks are the property of Home Box Office, Inc.

HBO®


Is it me?
Curb Your Enthusiasm

ers' marvellous gadget produced the illusion that it captured not just reality but the divine act of creation itself, and that the province of art was now open to anyone who merely rented the Lumière brothers' camera/projector—for which these silent clips served as advertisements.—*Richard Brody* (MOMA; Sept. 16-18.)

(500) DAYS OF SUMMER

He (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) is a romantic who studied architecture but is frittering away his salad days writing greeting cards. She (Zooey Deschanel) is a free-spirited cynic floating through life who happens to land in his office as an assistant and, soon, in his bed as a lover. Whether love itself will blossom is the whole story. For a movie about heartfelt connections, its characters have no depth or substance; for one about love, it has no chemistry or spontaneity; the action takes place in Los Angeles, though we see almost none of that city; and a reference to "The Graduate" does the film no favors. Forcedly cute, clumsily mechanical, overdetermined and undernourished, this ostensibly soulful romance is a plastic void. Directed by Marc Webb.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

THE HEADLESS WOMAN

The international art film is a genre with as many conventions as the most commercial products, and the Argentinean writer and director Lucrecia Martel adheres to them with practical craft but little originality. Taking cues from Antonioni's visions of an alienated bourgeoisie, she follows Vero (María Onetto), a pale, tightly wound dentist who, while driving along a lonely road, reaches to answer her cell phone and runs over—or thinks she's run over—a child. The rest of the film is the record of Vero's grim composure and its fissures in the face of her sense of guilt. Martel's visual style—with its ambiguous, off-balance compositions, framing actors at uneasy distances in awkward spaces—is at the service of a thinly realized, heavy-handed story. Martel ratchets up the story's political implications, highlighting the child's working-class background while depicting Vero and her milieu confined behind gates and guards, frittering away their lives talking about pets and fashions and indulging in gardening, hunting, school parties, and social rounds. Yet Martel tries to have it both ways, attempting to construct a rich reality by the accretion of ordinary and realistic detail, while stacking the narrative deck so rigorously that the characters evaporate into symbols almost upon their appearance. It is, ultimately, bourgeois spectators whose guilt is being stoked. In Spanish.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

THE HURT LOCKER

Over and over, Staff Sergeant William James (Jeremy Renner) walks to a bomb site in a heavy protective suit and tries to figure out how to pull apart the clumsily tangled wires and flimsy triggering devices of an I.E.D. (improvised explosive device). The two other members of James's team, the frightened young Eldridge (Brian Geraghty) and the wary, experienced Sanborn (Anthony Mackie), jerk their guns this way and that, covering him and screaming at anyone who moves. Kathryn Bigelow's movie is set in Baghdad in 2004, and it brings us, from its particular angle, closer to the dangers of the war than any other movie about this conflict. Bigelow keeps the space tight and coherent: no matter how many times she cuts away, you know exactly where James is in relation to the bomb—whether he's in the kill zone or far enough away to be safe. (You can't break up the integrity of space when space is the subject of your movie.) The movie is almost unbearably tense—it's a considerable achievement. With Guy Pearce and Ralph Fiennes in small roles. Written by Mark Boal.—*D.D.* (6/29/09) (In limited release.)

IN THE LOOP

A sour, all-hating satire from the director Armando Iannucci, who fulfills, to a fault, his desire to strip the last tatters of dignity and purpose from his characters. A British cabinet minister (Tom Hollander), his foot barely extricable from his mouth, lets slip an unguarded word about a possible war—looming, unspecified, but not so very far from Iraq. For his pains, he is sent to Washington for further humiliation, accompanied by an aide (Chris Addison) and harried by the Prime Minister's press secretary (Peter Capaldi), who is essentially Beelzebub in a suit. Both he and his equally foul-tongued deputy are Scottish, like Iannucci himself, and there is a definite flavor of jubilant, anti-English scolding in evidence—fitting enough, given the current Prime Minister, though the film's concerns seem more rooted in the era of Tony Blair and President Bush. The U.S. political class is viewed as no less venal than its British equivalent, and no less touched by absurdity, as when a uniformed general (improbably played by James Gandolfini) adds up troop numbers on a child's toy; still, when it comes to an inferiority complex, the Brits stand alone. The film is so mean and cramped to look at that even the sharper jokes, after a while, produce more of a headache than a laugh.—*A.L.* (7/27/09) (In limited release.)

INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS

In Quentin Tarantino's fantastical jest about the Second World War, a group of European film people and an American Army unit of vengeful Jews, the Basterds, led by a Gentile, Aldo Raine (Brad Pitt), separately plot to destroy the Nazi command, which has gathered at a movie theatre in Occupied Paris in 1944. For years, the Americans, operating in Occupied France, have been beating Nazi soldiers to death with a baseball bat and carving swastikas in their foreheads. Whether the Basterds are Tarantino's ideal of an all-American killing team or his parody of one is hard to say. Very little in "Basterds" is meant to be taken straight, but the movie isn't quite farce, either. It's lodged in an uneasy nowheresville between counterfactual pop fantasia and trashy exploitation. The picture isn't boring, but it's ridiculous, and stunningly insensitive—a teen-ager's dream of revenge too silly to enjoy, even as a joke. With the talented Christoph Waltz as a super-smart S.S. colonel. The role is a cliché of evil suavity out of old Warner Bros. movies, but Waltz is terrific at it.—*D.D.* (8/24/09) (In wide release.)

JULIE & JULIA

Meryl Streep as Julia Child, an American in Paris in the fifties, longing to write a cookbook, and Amy Adams as Julie Powell, a lost young American wife in Queens in 2002, who replicates Child's recipes. The structure is more a rhyming device than a dramatic idea, yet it works well enough to hold together a dual fable of driving ambition and anxious discipleship. The movie is memorable, of course, for Streep's performance. Like a tall ship at full sail, she leans, tilts, and billows. Odd explosions of air—whoops, exclamations—come hurtling through the passageways. She runs out of breath, and then settles, mysteriously, like an old Bible that italicizes ordinary words, on a single syllable. Nora Ephron, who wrote and directed, is interested in food less as something to cook than as the binding and unifying element in marriage, dinner parties, and friendship. In all, one of the most charming American movies of recent years. With Stanley Tucci and Chris Messina as supportive husbands. Based on books by Child and Powell.—*D.D.* (8/24/09) (In wide release.)

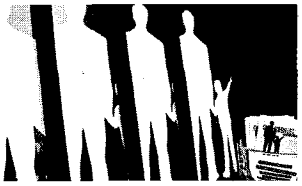
THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN AMERICA: DANIEL ELLSBERG AND THE PENTAGON PAPERS

In 1971, Daniel Ellsberg, the former marine and Defense Department analyst, released to the New York *Times* the top-secret Pentagon Papers, an extended history of America's involvement in Vietnam, which revealed that various Administrations had lied to the public about what they were doing. Judith Ehrlich and Rick Goldsmith's documentary chronicles a kind of secular spiritual journey—from warrior to anti-warrior, from analyst to activist, from patriot to "traitor." Ellsberg himself, now in his late seventies, describes the stages of his transformation with his usual precision and ardor, and the filmmakers fill in events with news footage and rather hokey re-creations of Ellsberg's actions (such as a man in shadow speaking into a telephone). The movie inadvertently suggests that, without considerable vanity and a touch of grandiosity, Ellsberg might never have acted as bravely as he did. But how many powerful men now take full responsibility for their actions? Featuring Oval Office tapes of Richard Nixon responding to Ellsberg's acts in his own ineffably vicious and low-minded style.—*D.D.* (Film Forum.)

9

Shane Acker's film begins with an ending: the world reduced to a dead zone of rusted, unpopulated

TABLES FOR TWO
GUS AND GABRIEL



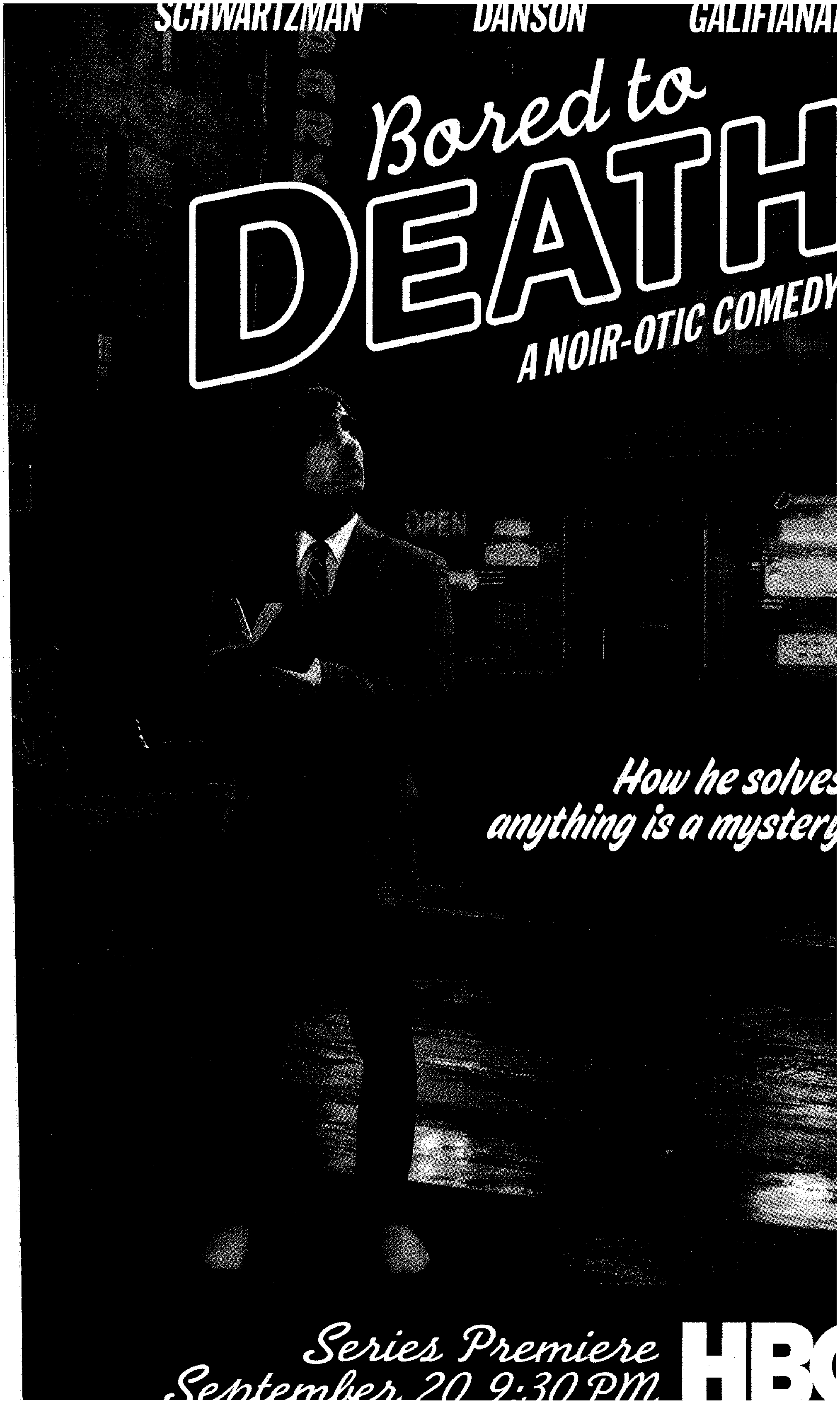
222 W. 79th St. (212-362-7470)—No more gastropubs! Originating in England, the gastropub heralded the arrival of edible, even sophisticated cuisine in drinking establishments whose culinary aspirations had previously risen no higher than the potato chip. Transplanted to New York, the genre now signals a lessening of ambition. Chefs who a decade ago would have been striving to come up with some pretentious new fusion of styles or ingredients now indulge in the more insidious pretension of being down to earth—serving up calorific comfort food like meat loaf or mac and cheese, perhaps with some attention-grabbing twist. Foodies shrug and mutter that hard times necessitate simpler fare, but the vogue preceded the downturn and—like the overpriced designer T-shirt—may represent a flight not from expense but from taste. As a term, "gastropub" is in danger of coming to mean "food for reasonably affluent young people who don't really care about food (or their waistline)."

That said, Michael Psilakis's new gastropub, tucked into a tricky space just off Broadway, is far better than many. Psilakis, who in the same venue first opened Onera, then Kefi, both ambitious, Greek-inspired restaurants, has definite talent. Sweetbreads, lightly breaded and cooked not a second too long, have a buoyant feel and an almost floral taste. "Salsa verde" gazpacho, made with cucumber, tomatillo, and jalapeño, has a richness that comes not from slathering on lipids but from pure flavor. Too often, though, the gastropub ethos prevails, and dishes absorb more grease than they can bear. A mountainous meat loaf is both covered in cheese and permeated with it. Bone marrow is submerged in garlic butter, escargot-style; the bones, sliced lengthways, arrive like two waterlogged canoes.

The room, small and far from quiet, is cheekily decorated—a suit of armor confronts you on arrival—and, this being a gastropub, cute gimmicks abound. The drinks list features mega-pours of whiskey served in hip flasks and malt liquor served in brown paper bags. There are extravagant milkshakes and sundaes, and sloganed T-shirts worn by the (uniformly upbeat and helpful) staff reinforce the message that it's O.K. to regress: "Live young. Embrace your inner child. Nourish the id." Perhaps the new gastropubs really are nourishing the id, and satisfying a craving. But their proliferation begs the question: are we that badly in need of comfort? (Open daily for dinner and Tuesdays through Sundays for lunch. Entrées $11.50-$14.95.)

—*Leo Carey*

JESSIE WENDER


SCHWARTZMAN
DANSON
GALIFIANA
PARK
Bored to
DEATH
A NOIR-OTIC COMEDY
OPEN
How he solves
anything is a myster
Series Premiere
September 20 9:30 PM
HB

townscapes, as a result of some ancient clash between triumphalist politicians and machines. The machines won. No organic beings remain, just a bestial contraption that stalks the streets, and, crouching in its shadow, a group of toylike creatures, patched together from leftover materials and known only by the numbers on their backs. Against the advice of 1 (voiced by Christopher Plummer), who hides in a ruined church, the dauntless 9 (Elijah Wood), the spunky 7 (Jennifer Connelly), and a handful of others set out to vanquish the mechanical brutes and prepare for the resumption of normal existence. How they achieve this is, to say the least, nebulous: something to do with hidden codes and the mint-green wraiths of their dead companions. But the film is itself given life by the wit and exactitude of the computer animation, which finds real texture and pathos in the fantastic.—*A.L.* (9/14/09) (In wide release.)

PIXOTE

A shockingly lyrical Brazilian film about the life of abandoned children who learn to pick pockets and grab purses and hustle—it's their only way of surviving. Thrown into the reformatory, the ten-year-old Pixote watches as several of the larger boys gang-rape a kid not much older than he is, and his truculent baby face is indifferent, but he's a little camera taking it all in. A group of boys, including Pixote, break out, and he and three others snatch enough purses and wallets to make their way to Rio de Janeiro and begin dealing cocaine. Outsmarted by the adult criminals, the kids buy an aging, drunken prostitute from a pimp and go into business with her: she brings men home, and they rob them at gunpoint. As the director, Hector Babenco (who appears in a prologue), sees it, Pixote is a snub-nosed infant asserting his wants, and when they're denied he changes into a baby gangster—a runt Scarface, who kills innocently, in the sense that he doesn't understand the enormity of the crime. The thesis is too pat, but two of the characters—Lilica (Jorge Julião), a flamingly nelly seventeen-year-old transvestite homosexual, and the whore Sueli, the whoriest whore imaginable (Marília Pêra)—transcend it. Dusky and aquiline-faced, Pêra has an Anna Magnani-like presence—horrifying and great. Her display of passion wipes the little non-actor kids off the screen. She's the whore spawned out of men's darkest imaginings, and in her scenes the movie achieves a raw garish splendor. Released in 1980. In Portuguese.—*Pauline Kael* (MOMA; Sept. 20.)

PONYO

The latest film from the celebrated Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki is a reworking of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid." Sosuke, a boy living with his mother in a cliffside shack with the ocean below, makes friends with a goldfish, Ponyo, who wants to be human. A good part of the movie takes place in the sea or on the beach—the volatile, ever-shifting nature of water brings out Miyazaki's virtuosity with dynamic shaping and variation. Some of the fable is a little too sweet, though Sosuke's mother (voiced by Tina Fey) is a tough cookie and drives the story forward. Pixar's John Lasseter supervised the English version. With the voices of Cate Blanchett, Liam Neeson, Matt Damon, Lily Tomlin, Cloris Leachman, and Betty White.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

RENDEZ-VOUS

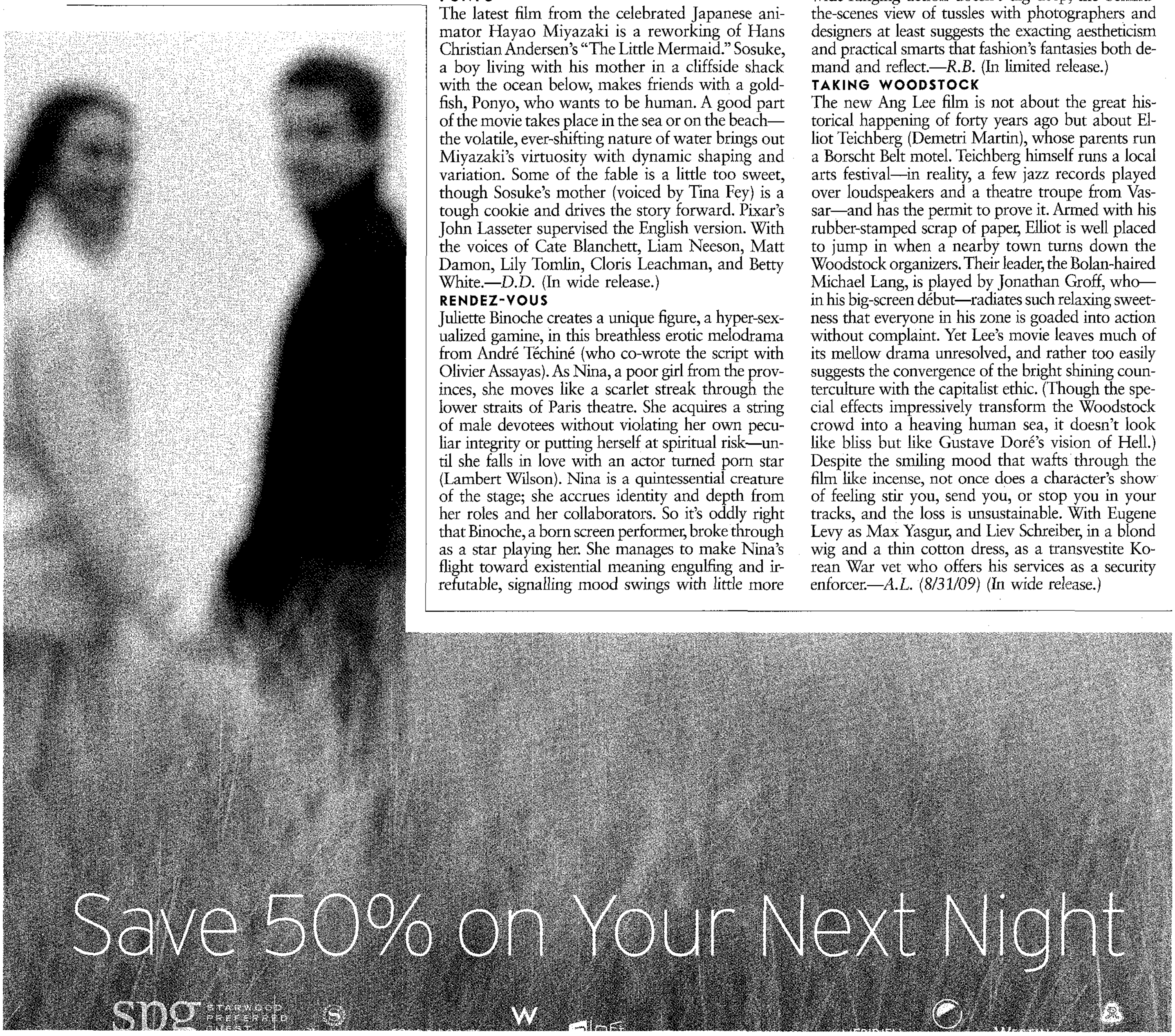
Juliette Binoche creates a unique figure, a hyper-sexualized gamine, in this breathless erotic melodrama from André Téchiné (who co-wrote the script with Olivier Assayas). As Nina, a poor girl from the provinces, she moves like a scarlet streak through the lower straits of Paris theatre. She acquires a string of male devotees without violating her own peculiar integrity or putting herself at spiritual risk—until she falls in love with an actor turned porn star (Lambert Wilson). Nina is a quintessential creature of the stage; she accrues identity and depth from her roles and her collaborators. So it's oddly right that Binoche, a born screen performer, broke through as a star playing her. She manages to make Nina's flight toward existential meaning engulfing and irrefutable, signalling mood swings with little more than the flick of an eyelid. Wadeck Stanczak embraces the volatile pathos of the nice guy who's in love with her; Jean-Louis Trintignant proves eloquently ravaged as the director who casts her in "Romeo and Juliet." The whole movie, with its abrupt turnarounds and matter-of-fact jolts, is like a Bertrand Blier farce played perilously straight. Binoche's performance and Téchiné's fluid, passionate moviemaking carry you through. Released in 1985.—*Michael Sragow* (IFC Center; Sept. 11-13.)

THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE

As the title suggests, R. J. Cutler's conventional but engaging documentary about the inner workings of *Vogue* has its drama built into it: the race against time to compose and to complete the 2007 edition of the year's keystone issue, as seen from the top. Cutler anchors the film on a portrait of the magazine's editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour, but he wisely builds the action around her fruitful collaboration—and, at times, conflict—with Grace Coddington, *Vogue's* creative director, whose inspired concepts for photo shoots and hands-on stylings furnish the raw material for Wintour's synoptic shaping of the magazine and its place in the world. The regal André Leon Talley, the editor-at-large, provides comic relief, and, though the quick-cutting sprint through the wide-ranging action doesn't dig deep, the behind-the-scenes view of tussles with photographers and designers at least suggests the exacting aestheticism and practical smarts that fashion's fantasies both demand and reflect.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

TAKING WOODSTOCK

The new Ang Lee film is not about the great historical happening of forty years ago but about Elliot Teichberg (Demetri Martin), whose parents run a Borscht Belt motel. Teichberg himself runs a local arts festival—in reality, a few jazz records played over loudspeakers and a theatre troupe from Vassar—and has the permit to prove it. Armed with his rubber-stamped scrap of paper, Elliot is well placed to jump in when a nearby town turns down the Woodstock organizers. Their leader, the Bolan-haired Michael Lang, is played by Jonathan Groff, who—in his big-screen début—radiates such relaxing sweetness that everyone in his zone is goaded into action without complaint. Yet Lee's movie leaves much of its mellow drama unresolved, and rather too easily suggests the convergence of the bright shining counterculture with the capitalist ethic. (Though the special effects impressively transform the Woodstock crowd into a heaving human sea, it doesn't look like bliss but like Gustave Doré's vision of Hell.) Despite the smiling mood that wafts through the film like incense, not once does a character's show of feeling stir you, send you, or stop you in your tracks, and the loss is unsustainable. With Eugene Levy as Max Yasgur, and Liev Schreiber, in a blond wig and a thin cotton dress, as a transvestite Korean War vet who offers his services as a security enforcer.—*A.L.* (8/31/09) (In wide release.)



35 SHOTS OF RUM
The French director Claire Denis's tender tribute to the bond of a father and a daughter brings the moody luminosity of the art house to a story as sentimental and untroubling as a Hallmark special. The drama, such as it is, concerns Lionel (Alex Descas), a widowed conductor on Paris's suburban lines, who shares an apartment in a bland suburban housing complex with his daughter, Joséphine (Mati Diop), a university student who is being courted by their neighbor, Noé (Grégoire Colin). The textures of daily life, the slight variations in the routines of work and leisure, of studies and amusements, are more suggested than conveyed; Denis's gentle, well-meaning conceptions of the working-class milieu, including the depictions of France as a multiracial society (Lionel, like most of his colleagues and Joséphine's classmates, is black, his wife was white), are heartwarming, unexceptionable, and as shallow as a campaign poster. Denis and her screenwriter, Jean-Pol Fargeau, make a familiar mistake that has become a convention: they lend working people gravitas by giving them almost nothing to say. In French.—*R.B.* (Film Forum.)

WORLD'S GREATEST DAD
This dark comedy, written and directed by Bobcat Goldthwait, is a timely reminder of how good an actor Robin Williams can be. Williams plays a poetry teacher and aspiring novelist who is trying to connect with his troubled teen-age son. When things go horribly wrong, he reshapes his son's life in a deceitful and self-promoting way. Goldthwait brings out the subject's uncomfortable humor (the story turns on a heinous fraud), and, to his credit, he keeps the film nihilistic and unsentimental prior to its less than convincing redemptive ending. It's a bumpy ride, and some of the absurdist humor goes wide of the mark, but Williams's enigmatic, level performance helps it take the cynical turns well.—*Bruce Diones* (In limited release.)

Also Playing

BIG FAN: Angelika Film Center. **CRUDE:** IFC Center. **THE FINAL DESTINATION:** In wide release. **WALT & EL GRUPO:** In limited release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—In première. Sept. 16-17 at 7 and 9: "The Painter Sam Francis" (2008, Jeffrey Perkins). ♦ Sept. 18 and Sept. 21-24 at 7 and 8:45 and Sept. 19-20 at 5:15, 7, and 8:45: "If One Thing Matters: A Film About Wolfgang Tillmans" (2008, Heiko Kalmbach).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—The films of Robert Redford. Sept. 16 at 6:50 and 9:30: "Three Days of the Condor" (1975, Sydney Pollack). ♦ Through Sept. 30: "Rendez-vous with Juliette Binoche." Sept. 18 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Rendez-vous" (†). ♦ Sept. 19 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Damage" (1992, Louis Malle). ♦ Sept. 20 at 2:30, 5:30, and 8:30: "Flight of the Red Balloon" (2007, Hou Hsiao-Hsien; in French and Mandarin). ♦ Sept. 21 at 4:30 and 6:50: "Blue" (1993, Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French). The 6:50 screening will be followed by a Q. & A. with Binoche.

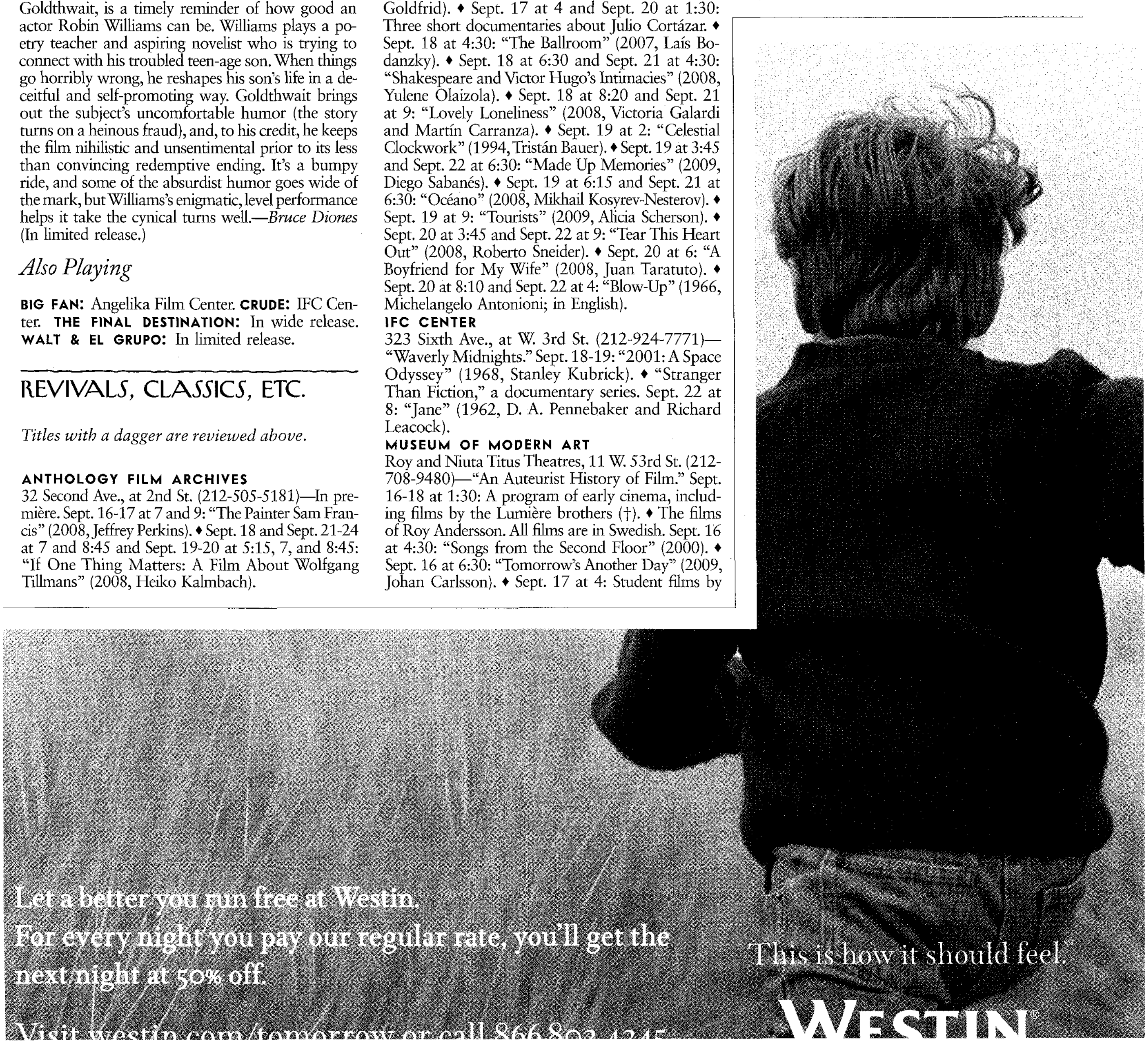
FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Sept. 16-17 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, and 10: "Odd Man Out" (1947, Carol Reed). ♦ Sept. 18-Oct. 1 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "Fat City" (1972, John Huston).

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (212-875-5610)—The Latinbeat Film Festival. Except where noted, films are in Spanish. Sept. 16 at 4: "The General" (2008, Natalia Almada). ♦ Sept. 16 at 6:15: "One for the Road" (2009, Eva López Sánchez). ♦ Sept. 16 at 8:30: "Music on Hold" (2009, Hernán A. Goldfrid). ♦ Sept. 17 at 4 and Sept. 20 at 1:30: Three short documentaries about Julio Cortázar. ♦ Sept. 18 at 4:30: "The Ballroom" (2007, Laís Bodanzky). ♦ Sept. 18 at 6:30 and Sept. 21 at 4:30: "Shakespeare and Victor Hugo's Intimacies" (2008, Yulene Olaizola). ♦ Sept. 18 at 8:20 and Sept. 21 at 9: "Lovely Loneliness" (2008, Victoria Galardi and Martín Carranza). ♦ Sept. 19 at 2: "Celestial Clockwork" (1994, Tristán Bauer). ♦ Sept. 19 at 3:45 and Sept. 22 at 6:30: "Made Up Memories" (2009, Diego Sabanés). ♦ Sept. 19 at 6:15 and Sept. 21 at 6:30: "Océano" (2008, Mikhail Kosyrev-Nesterov). ♦ Sept. 19 at 9: "Tourists" (2009, Alicia Scherson). ♦ Sept. 20 at 3:45 and Sept. 22 at 9: "Tear This Heart Out" (2008, Roberto Sneider). ♦ Sept. 20 at 6: "A Boyfriend for My Wife" (2008, Juan Taratuto). ♦ Sept. 20 at 8:10 and Sept. 22 at 4: "Blow-Up" (1966, Michelangelo Antonioni; in English).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Waverly Midnights." Sept. 18-19: "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ "Stranger Than Fiction," a documentary series. Sept. 22 at 8: "Jane" (1962, D. A. Pennebaker and Richard Leacock).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"An Auteurist History of Film." Sept. 16-18 at 1:30: A program of early cinema, including films by the Lumière brothers (†). ♦ The films of Roy Andersson. All films are in Swedish. Sept. 16 at 4:30: "Songs from the Second Floor" (2000). ♦ Sept. 16 at 6:30: "Tomorrow's Another Day" (2009, Johan Carlsson). ♦ Sept. 17 at 4: Student films by Andersson, including "Saturday October 5" (1969). ♦ Sept. 18 at 4: Short films and commercials by Andersson, including "Something Happened" (1987). ♦ "ContemporAsian." Sept. 16 at 8 and Sept. 17 at 7: "Dajang Soembi, the Woman Who Was Married to a Dog" (2004, Edwin; in Indonesian) and "Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly" (2008, Edwin; in Indonesian). ♦ "Critical Favorites: The New York Film Critics Circle at 75." Sept. 17 at 4:30: "In the Heat of the Night" (1967, Norman Jewison). ♦ Sept. 18 at 4:30: "Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb" (1964, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Sept. 19 at 2: "Wall-E" (2008, Andrew Stanton). ♦ Sept. 19 at 4:15 and Sept. 21 at 4:15: "Fanny and Alexander" (1982, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). ♦ Sept. 19 at 8: "Mon Oncle" (1958, Jacques Tati; in French). ♦ Sept. 20 at 5:30: "Pixote" (†). ♦ Sept. 20 at 8: "Grand Illusion" (1937, Jean Renoir). ♦ In première. Sept. 18 at 7, Sept. 19 at 1:30, Sept. 20 at 5, and Sept. 21 at 4: "Harmony and Me" (2009, Bob Byington). ♦ "Looking at Music: Side 2." Sept. 21 at 7: "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese).

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." Sept. 18 at 9:30: "Clue" (1985, Jonathan Lynn).


Let a better you run free at Westin.
For every night you pay our regular rate, you'll get the next night at 50% off.
Visit westin.com/tomorrow or call 866 803 4345
This is how it should feel.℠
WESTIN®

READINGS AND TALKS

JAMES COHAN GALLERY
A night of humor, with Andy Borowitz, Patricia Marx, Susan Orlean, and David Rakoff reading for the benefit of Promise at Lenox Hill Hospital, an organization devoted to education for children from low-income families. (533 W. 26th St. For tickets, which are required, e-mail promisebenefit09@aol.com. Sept. 16 at 7.)

CANTOR FILM CENTER
Eric Bogosian offers selections from his new novel, "Perforated Heart." (New York University, 38 E. 8th St. No tickets necessary. Sept. 17 at 7.)

GRADUATE CENTER
The writers Peter Conn, Morris Dickstein, Molly Haskell, and Alice Kessler-Harris discuss the film, music, art, and literature of the Great Depression. The jazz critic Gary Giddins, a contributor to this magazine, is the moderator. (City University of New York, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. No tickets necessary. Sept. 21 at 6:30.)

BARNES & NOBLE
Frank Bruni, who until recently was the restaurant critic for the *Times*, reads from his memoir, "Born Round: The Secret History of a Full-Time Eater." (Broadway at 66th St. Sept. 22 at 7:30.)

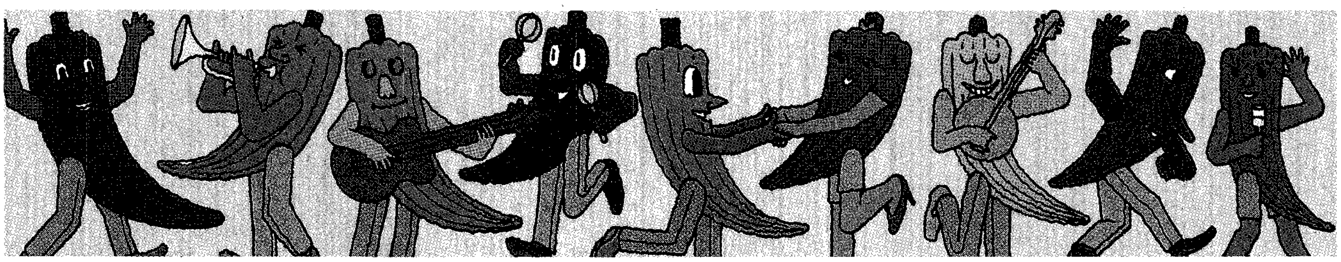
ABOVE AND BEYOND

OKTOBERFEST
The fifty-second annual German-American Steuben Parade makes its way up Fifth Ave., from 68th to 86th Sts., starting at noon on Sept. 19. It is followed by a gathering in Central Park that traces its inspiration back to the wedding of Prince Ludwig and Princess Theresa, in Munich in 1810. Many of the bands from the parade will perform, and there will be beer from Germany and German food. This is the largest Oktoberfest celebration in Manhattan. This year's event includes the first ever National Masskrugstemmen Championship, a contest in which a full *masskrug* (a one-litre beer stein) is held outstretched from the body. The contestant who remains standing the longest, without lowering the cup or spilling any beer, wins a prize—in this case a trip to the Hofbrauhaus, Munich's famous beer hall. (Rumsey Playfield, Central Park, mid-Park at 72nd St. For more information, visit www.germanparadenyc.org.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
In the field of Asian art, the taste for the trendy and volatile seems to have evaporated, replaced by a hunger for pedigree and proven value. The collections of Arthur M. Sackler—one of the country's most important collectors, who died in 1987—offer just that, and both of the big houses lead off their Asian sales with groups of Sackler holdings. At **Sotheby's** on Sept. 16 there will be a sale of furniture (beautiful *huanghuali* wood pieces from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), rugs, and other objects from his collections, followed by a wide-ranging auction of Chinese ceramics and works of art. Sept. 17 is devoted to a selective group (only ninety-two lots) of South Asian modern and contemporary art (mainly Indian masters like Vasudeo Gaitonde, Tyeb Mehta, and M. F. Husain), as well as Indian miniatures from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ After two sprawling days of Chinese art featuring a group of Sackler bronzes, jades, and sculptures, **Christie's** moves on to South Asian art (Sept. 16), with modern and contemporary works in the morning and more traditional pieces (bronzes, stone sculptures, and miniatures) in the afternoon; as at Sotheby's, one of the top modern lots, "Mahishasura," is a mythological painting by the Indian modernist Tyeb Mehta, who died earlier this year. On the final day (Sept. 17), Japanese and Korean art goes under the gavel, including a large selection of delicate utensils used in the tea ceremony as well as a characteristically spare painting by the modern Korean painter Park Sookeum. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ **Bonhams** joins the party by holding two auctions of Japanese art on Sept. 16; the first focusses on the small objects known as netsuke and *sagemono* (tiny sculptures, cases, and purses designed to hang from a kimono). A sale of classical Chinese furniture from a private collection follows on Sept. 18. (580 Madison Ave. 212-644-9001.) ♦ The highlight of **Swann's** auction of printed and manuscript Americana (Sept. 17) is a trove of miscellanea related to Howard Hughes, specifically his 1946 plane crash in Beverly Hills, including a piece of the plane, an account of the crash by a witness, and a thank-you letter from Hughes to the man who saved him. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

NEWYORKER.COM

Visit the Goings On blog, at www.newyorker.com/go/goingson, for additional cultural coverage and commentary.



ON THE HORIZON

THE THEATRE
POWER PLAY
Sept. 29

David Mamet has no fewer than four plays being produced in New York this fall, including the Broadway première of the 1992 two-hander "Oleanna," with Bill Pullman and Julia Stiles as a professor and a student. Doug Hughes directs, at the Golden. (212-239-6200.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
GRAND BAND
Oct. 1

This year's Carnegie Hall season begins as it usually does, with a world-class orchestral performance and brand-name stars. James Levine conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in music by Berlioz, Chopin, Debussy, and John Williams ("On Willows and Birches," a new concerto for harp and orchestra). (212-247-7800.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND
HOT OR NOT
Oct. 3

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's annual Chile Pepper Fiesta is packed with culinary firepower, but there's more to the festival than heat. B.B.G.'s new "Chocolate Chile Cabana" explores the sweeter side of spicy things, and musical acts like Pistolera and the Lost Bayou Ramblers will keep your feet moving. (www.bbg.org.)

MOVIES
WORDS TO THE WISE
Oct. 6-27

It's no surprise that Fabrice Luchini, the most verbally acrobatic of French actors, figures prominently in the oeuvre of Eric Rohmer, two of whose films are featured in French Institute Alliance Française's retrospective of Luchini's work. The actor will be on hand to introduce Christian Vincent's "The Discreet" and will also do a reading of literary texts. (212-355-6160.)

ART
ROCK OF AGES
Oct. 30-Jan. 31

From a portrait of Elvis Presley, captured mid-wail in 1955 by William V. (Red) Robertson, to Andreas Gursky's picture of a sea of fans at a Madonna concert, "Who Shot Rock & Roll," at the Brooklyn Museum, surveys the camera's decades-long love affair with rock. (718-638-5000.)

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Chile Pepper Fiesta.

JIM STOTEN

9 billion

people to feed. A changing climate.

NOW WHAT?

Experts say we'll need to double agricultural output by 2050 to feed a growing world. That's challenge enough. But with a changing climate, the challenge becomes even greater.

Providing abundant and accessible food means putting the latest science-based tools in farmers' hands, including advanced hybrid and biotech seeds. Monsanto's advanced seeds not only significantly increase crop yields, they use fewer key resources – like land and fuel – to do it. That's a win-win for people, and the earth itself.

Producing more. Conserving more. Improving farmers' lives. That's sustainable agriculture. And that's what Monsanto is all about.

The world's farmers will need to double food production by 2050. Biotechnology can help.

Learn more at: **www.ProduceMoreConserveMore.com**

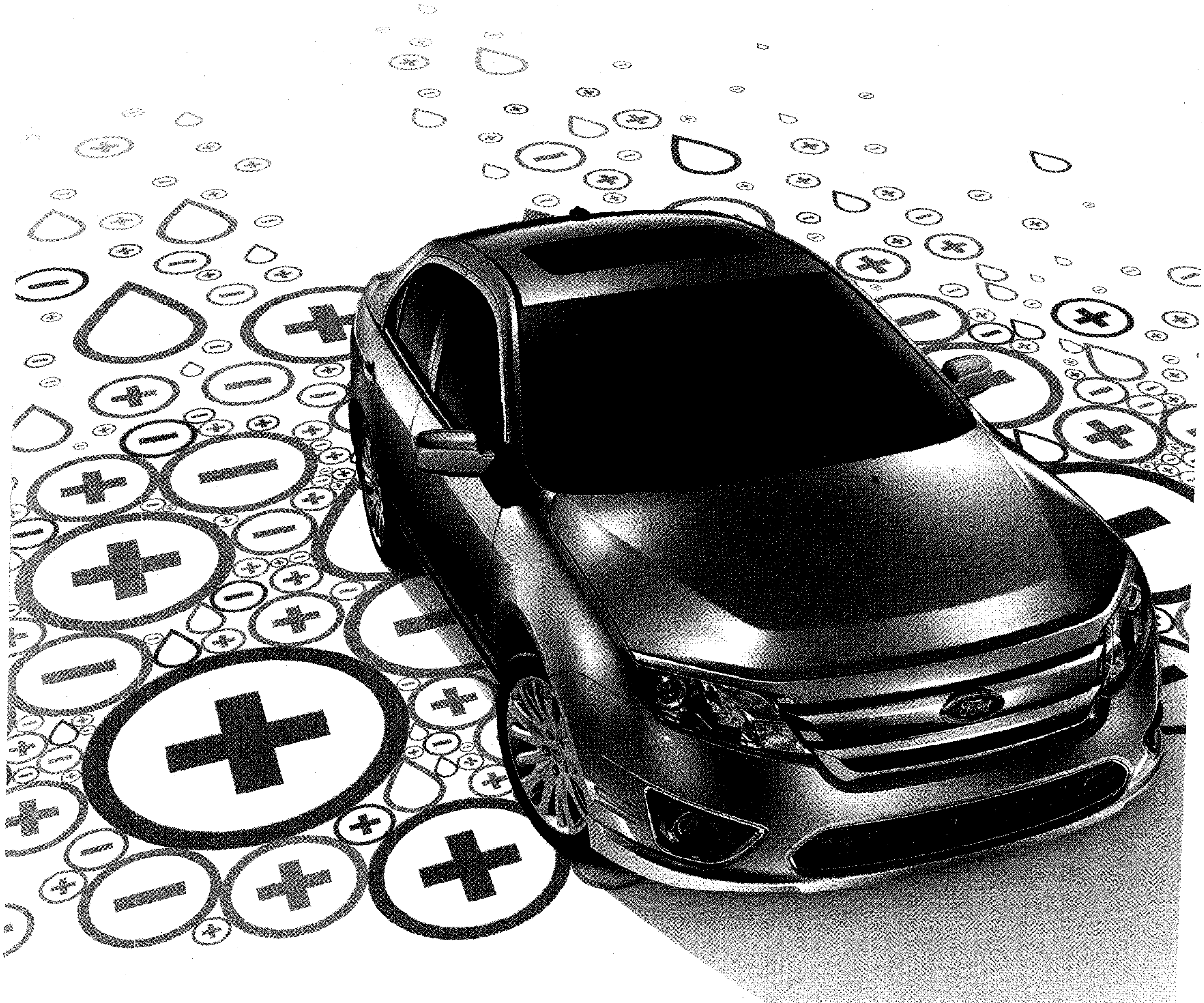
MONSANTO
imagine®

PRODUCING MORE | CONSERVING MORE | IMPROVING FARMERS' LIVES

© 2009 Monsanto Co. Monsanto Imagine and the Vine Design are trademarks of Monsanto Technology LLC.

IF 41 MPG DOESN'T CHARGE YOU UP, ITS BATTERY WILL.*

THE 2010 FORD FUSION HYBRID



Our next-generation battery pack helps Fusion Hybrid deliver 41 city mpg,* making it the most fuel-efficient midsize sedan. It also allows us to do other things better than the competition, like go 47 mph in electric vehicle mode and travel more than 700 miles on a single tank. **fordvehicles.com**

Ford

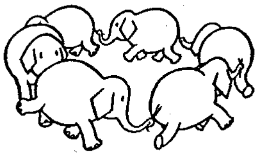
Drive one.

*EPA-estimated 41 city/36 hwy mpg. Actual mileage will vary. Midsize class per R. L. Polk & Co. 17.5-gallon gas tank.

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

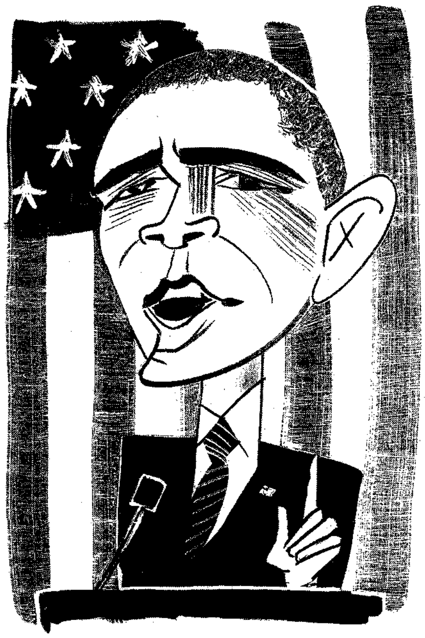
COMMENT
LIES



After the tea-partying, town-meeting-disrupting, pistol-packing *mensis horribilis* of August, more than a few commentators complained, as one of them put it, that "Obama should have seen it coming." No one doubted that the current attempt to overhaul America's uniquely wasteful and unjust system of health insurance and non-insurance would touch off the kind of demagogic, misleading attacks that have greeted every past attempt at ambitious reform, successful (Medicare) and unsuccessful (all the rest) alike. The plan is socialism; government bureaucrats will choose your doctor and prescribe your treatments; the economy will be ruined; taxes will crush you—all that and more was to be expected. But the predominant tone of opposition to the emerging Democratic health-care proposals, and to the President personally, came as a surprise to the White House and a profound shock to many who voted for Barack Obama last November.

Perhaps it was naïve, and obviously it was optimistic, to hope that once Obama—having been elected by a large and undisputed majority, unlike his two predecessors—took office the nastiness of the assault against him would subside. And so it did, briefly. But as the reality sank in that this temperamentally conservative President intends to make good on his substantively progressive promises, the fury returned, uglier than before and no longer subject to the minimal restraints inherent in a national electoral campaign aimed at persuading a plurality of voters. Lies and fantasies about health-care reform swirled together with lies and fantasies about the chief executive himself. Obama is plotting to set up "death panels," government tribunals authorized to euthanize the old and sick. Obama was born in Kenya and therefore his very Presidency is unconstitutional. Obama will cut Medicare benefits to provide coverage to illegal aliens. Obama seeks to indoctrinate children in Marxist ideology and put teenagers in "reëducation camps." Obama is a Communist. Obama is a Fascist.

This sort of lunatic paranoia—touched with populism, nativism, racism, and anti-intellectualism—has long been a feature of the fringe, especially during times of economic bewilderment. What is different now is the evolution of a new political organism, with paranoia as its animating principle. The town-meeting shouters may be the organism's hands and feet, but its heart—also, Heaven help us, its brain—is a "conservative" media alliance built around talk radio and cable television, especially Fox News. The protesters do not look to politicians for leadership. They look to niche media figures like Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck, Michael Savage, and their scores of clones behind local and national microphones. Because these figures have no responsibilities, they cannot disappoint. Their sneers may be false and hateful—they all routinely liken the President and the "Democrat Party" to murderous totalitarians—but they are employed by large, nominally respectable corporations and supported by national advertisers, lending them a considerable measure of institutional prestige. The dominant wing of the Republican Party is increasingly an appendage of the organism—the tail, you might say, though it seems to wag more often from fear than from happiness. Many Republican officeholders, even some reputed moderates like Senator Chuck Grassley, of Iowa, have obediently echoed the foul nonsense.



Over the summer, the organism probably succeeded, on balance, in accelerating the decline in Obama's poll ratings, a decline that was inevitable once the inaugural glow faded, the economic crisis

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

**Introducing Ally.
A straightforward bank with a quaint concept:
It's your money, not ours.**

We believe banking took a wrong turn somewhere with fees and penalties. That's why we offer rates that are consistently among the most competitive in the country, we never hide behind fine print, and we give you 24/7 access to a real human. Why? It's just the right thing to do.

ally

Straightforward.

877-247-ALLY | allybank.com

failed to vanish, and the messy, confusing legislative battles began. With the help of what appeared to be White House passivity, it certainly succeeded in demoralizing the center-left, stoking the fears of the ill-informed and persuading the press that health-care reform was in serious, maybe terminal, trouble.

Part of Obama's task last Wednesday evening, when he delivered an address to a joint session of Congress, was to dispel the talk radio–Fox News miasma—to give heart to his nervous supporters in the House chamber and beyond, reassure them that he knows what he's doing, and bolster their confidence by showing them his. In that, he succeeded. The address was his best as President. Some centrist positioning early in the speech—especially an implication that "those on the left" who favor a single-payer system and "those on the right" who favor leaving everybody to buy health insurance individually are equally "radical"—gave some a sinking feeling. (Medicare is a single-payer system. It is not radical.) But the President's bipartisan pleasantries only made his firmness more impressive. His civility was matched by fight and fire. He called the death-panels claim—"made not just by radio and cable talk-show hosts but by prominent politicians," some of whom were sitting in front of him—exactly what it is: "a lie, plain and simple." And this:

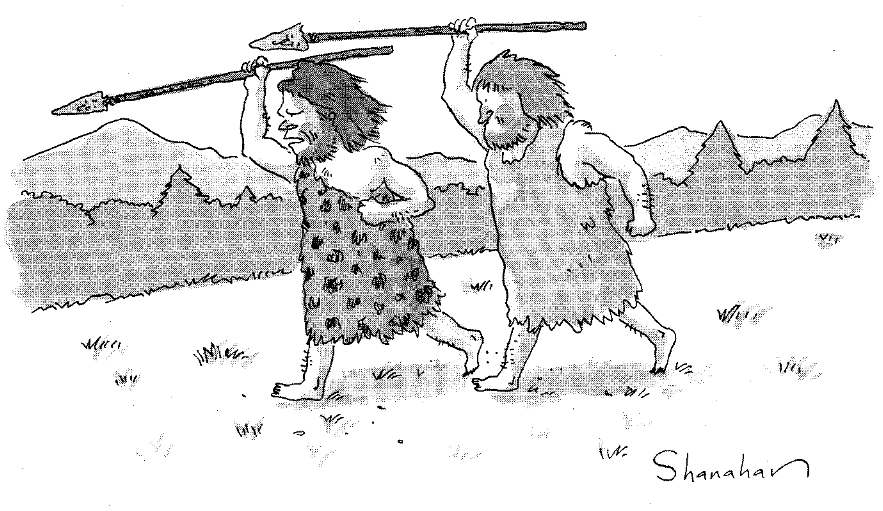
> If you come to me with a serious set of proposals, I will be there to listen. My door is always open. But know this: I will not waste time with those who have made the calculation that it's better politics to kill this plan than to improve it.

Obama is sometimes faulted for conducting government by speech. But this speech was part of a patient strategy that, despite August's rough weather, is looking increasingly sound. In 1993, President Clinton delivered a similarly well-received health-care address on Capitol Hill. But he then dumped a detailed, already-worked-out bill in Congress's lap. The implication: Take it or leave it. Obama has left the bill-writing to the legislators (with intense White House kibitzing, of course) and has waited until the stretch to take the reins. When Harry and Louise torpedoed the Clinton plan's popularity, Democrats panicked and abandoned the foundering plan. Obama's approach made it difficult for him to stump for "his" plan, because its shape was necessarily unknown; now his numbers are slipping, too. But slipping poll numbers are less apt to panic members of Congress who have invested themselves in the shaping of the legislation and have had time to reflect on what followed failure last time: the Democrats lost control of the House for the first time in forty years.

Obama's treatment of the "public option"—a kind of mini-Medicare that would compete with private insurance in a limited way—encapsulated his strategy. He defended it passionately, convincing many liberal doubters that he truly believes in it and knows that it would yield better care at lower cost. He also made it clear that he prefers reform without the public option—but with near-universal coverage and an end to "preëxisting conditions," arbitrary cancellation of insurance, and the fear that losing or changing your job will cost you your savings and perhaps your life—to no reform at all. If it were up to the House alone, of course, the public option would be a lock. But in the filibuster-hobbled Senate the fate of reform may come down to the whims of a tiny handful of preening moderates from states that are mostly empty of people, notably the Democratic chairman of the Finance Committee, Max Baucus, of Montana, and Olympia Snowe, Republican of Maine.

Bipartisanship is a fine sentiment and an appealing tactic, but where health care is concerned it was never a great idea. The boorish South Carolina Republican who shouted "You lie!" at the President after he said, truthfully, that reform "would not apply to those who are here illegally" did the public weal a favor by underlining bipartisanship's futility. A bill that reflects a necessary compromise among Democrats is bound to be stronger than one that reflects an unnecessary compromise between Democrats and Republicans. And that's no lie.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*



"I wanted to be a hunter and gatherer, but I couldn't handle the course load."

NOT TONIGHT DEPT.
HEAD FIRST

Cindy McCain has endured a number of public tribulations, including miscarriage, stroke, knee replacement, ruptured disks, and an addiction to painkillers. Last year, as her husband, John, campaigned for President, her weight dipped below a hundred pounds. During a rally in West Bloomfield, Michigan, she suffered a handshake injury—a minor sprain, aggravating an old carpal-tunnel problem—sustained, her husband said, when a supporter "very vigorously" pumped her right hand. It was thus surprising to learn recently that Cindy McCain had, all along, been engaged in "a silent struggle," one "that has burdened her through many political campaigns, her charitable work, and her day-to-day life." The bearer of the news was the American Headache Society, and the adversary was migraine. "You know the picture in *People* magazine with me in the little dress?" McCain recalled. "That was the worst.

Get the most out of the new BlackBerry® Tour.™ Conquer your workload right now. Email and get on the Internet pronto. Make calls in 193 countries and grab data in 144. Join the Now Network.™ America's most dependable 3G network, bringing you the first and only wireless 4G network from a national carrier. 1-800-SPRINT-1 sprint.com/tour

The 3G BlackBerry® Tour™ 9630 smartphone

$199.99

For your business account, or after a $100 mail-in rebate for your non-business account.

Requires a two-year agreement and a plan with BlackBerry® service.

Sprint

The Now Network™

BlackBerry
12:21
(3) Messages
Sprint

PC World *Sprint tested as the most reliable 3G network overall among U.S. carriers in a recent 13-city 3G performance test conducted by* PC World.

May require up to a $36 activation fee/line, credit approval and deposit. Up to a $200 early termination fee/line applies. Business account offer available only for corporate-liable accounts. Offer ends 10/31/09 or while supplies last. $299.99 (two-year price) - $100 mail-in rebate = $199.99 (final price). Taxes and service charges excluded. No cash back. Requires activation at the time of purchase. Data plan required on all active BlackBerry handsets. Voice and data may be purchased separately. Calls made without a voice plan: airtime ($0.20/min.) plus long distance ($0.20/min.). International service requires Sprint Worldwide Service and is subject to additional fees. See sprint.com/sww for details. **Mail-in Rebate:** Requires purchase by 10/31/09 and activation by 11/14/09. Line must be active 30 consecutive days. Allow 10 to 14 weeks for rebate. **America's Most Dependable 3G Network Claim:** "Dependable" based on independent third-party drive tests for 3G data connection success, session reliability and signal strength for the top 50 most populous markets from January '08 to May '09. Not all services available on 3G and coverage may default to a separate network when 3G is unavailable. ***PC World* Claim:** *PC World*'s tests included thirteen major cities with more than twenty tests per city from all regions of the country during a two-month period from March to April 2009. In all, 5,443 individual tests from 283 testing locations were conducted for each provider's 3G service. Testing was one minute in duration, and network performance can be highly variable from neighborhood to neighborhood. The thirteen cities included Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Denver, New Orleans, New York, Orlando, Phoenix, Portland, San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco and Seattle. Sprint won for reliability in Boston, Chicago, Denver, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco and Seattle. Sprint tied for reliability in Orlando. **4G:** 4G is currently available in limited areas and on select devices; check sprint.com/4G for Sprint 4G coverage/device info. **Other Terms:** Coverage not available everywhere. The 3G Sprint Mobile Broadband Network (including roaming) reaches over 271 million people. Offers not available in all markets/retail locations or for all phones/networks. Other restrictions apply. See store or sprint.com for details. ©2009 Sprint. Sprint and the logo are trademarks of Sprint. Other marks are the property of their respective owners.

FOCUS on driving

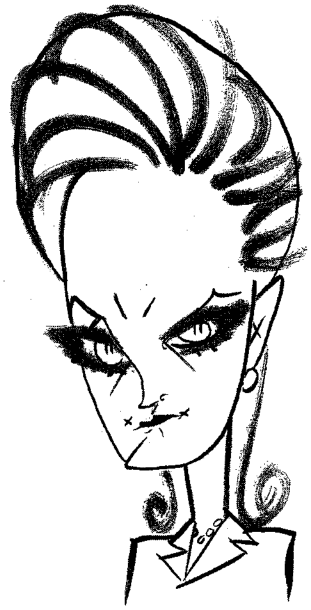
We were with President Bush—where was it, Arizona? Anyway, I got up, because I had to, and once I got on the airplane I collapsed.”

McCain was speaking as the guest of honor at a luncheon given by the A.H.S. in a private room at Le Bernardin. (The next day, in Philadelphia, she would be the keynote speaker at the Fourteenth Congress of the International Headache Society.) She was dressed in spectator pumps and a chartreuse piqué suit. Everything about her seemed lemony—tart yellow bob, pursed lips. Her commentary, aided by a stack of blue index cards—one listed migraine sufferers in history: “THOMAS JEFFERSON, JOAN OF ARC, VIRGINIA WOOLF”—was astringent. She recalled, “The first doctor I went to basically said, ‘Well, you’re just neurotic, you’re just stressed, your husband’s a senator. Go home, put your feet up, and have a drink.’” She continued, “What affected me the most was being talked to like I was dumb. That infuriated me.” McCain has decided to become an advocate for the disorder, which, in her view, is a disability. “I’ve missed part of my life. I’ve missed my children in many ways,” she said. “I’ve made every important event, but there’re times I’ve been throwing up out the car window.”

Migraine advocates talk a lot about triggers—stimuli that, for unknown reasons, tend to set off attacks. (They also invariably refer to “migraine” in the singular.) McCain, who experiences changes in her field of vision at the onset of her headaches—“I get the aura, the floaters, the ziggies”—believes that sudden drops in barometric pressure are one of her triggers. She was coming off a ten-day headache: “In Arizona we get these huge, monsoonlike thunderstorms, and, boy, that was all it took.” Smells are another concern. Not long ago, on business in Dubai, she opened her luggage to find that a bottle of perfume had shattered during the flight. She said, “All I had to do was unzip the bag, and I had to go straight home.”

Certain foods pose problems: red meat, chicken, chocolate. “My husband, it was his birthday,” McCain recalled. “We had this great chocolate cake—I really didn’t want to eat it. He insisted that I take some of the cake, and, I mean, I just crashed off of it.” Cooking odors can be dangerous (“It’s more weird stuff, like in some of the countries I travel in it can be, forgive me, but the scent of cooking dog”), as can additives (“MSG will send me over the moon”). Wine is out. So is Stella Artois, a beer that Hensley & Company, the huge beverage concern that McCain inherited in 2000, distributes across Arizona. She explained, “It’s got sulfites comin’ out the wazoo.”

Treating migraine is an inexact science. McCain has tried everything: acupuncture, acupressure, massage, tricyclics, analgesics, biofeedback. Once, in the Micronesian islands of Yap, where she had travelled as part of a charity mission, a medicine man crushed up some guava leaves and stuck them in her mouth. (“It did help,” she said.) McCain adheres to a daily regimen of pills to manage the condition, and this year she participated in a clinical trial to test the effectiveness of Botox in alleviating migraine. “You know, they ring your head in it,” she said. “It hurts like the dickens. But I’ll do anything, including chew broken glass, if it would help me get rid of this.”



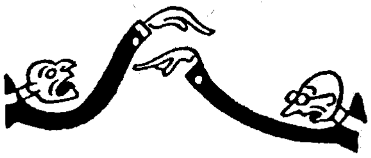
Cindy McCain

Her goal is to raise money for research into treatments explicitly for migraine. At Le Bernardin, she said, “For the first time in my life, I’m going to go to Congress, and I’m going to be tenacious and be forceful and be honest and tell them that it’s time. If you can give five million dollars to study flatulence in cows and its effects on the ozone layer, you can give *me* some money for migraine research.”

McCain is also considering making a video diary of a migraine, in the mode of Farrah Fawcett’s cancer documentary. “It’s so dramatic when it happens,” she said. “I wind up going into an infusion unit, and it’s traumatic, because I’m a hard stick, and I’m crying half the time.” She paused. “People don’t really understand, because a headache’s more than just a headache.”

—*Lauren Collins*

TUG OF WAR
WHO KNOWS BROOKLYN?



A few weeks ago, Brian Merlis received a copy of the book “Historic Photos of Brooklyn” (Turner; $39.95), from a friend, for his fifty-fourth birthday. Good gift, you might think: Merlis is from Brooklyn, collects photographs, and calls himself an “old-school localist.” He read the book and was moved to send unsolicited reviews to the Brooklyn *Paper* and the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*. “It seems that every week or so a new book about Brooklyn hits the shelves,” he wrote. “With mass-media publishers like Arcadia, Turner, and other vanity presses cashing in on the borough’s popularity, if you can put together a group of old photos and a few words, you might get published and be able to call yourself an expert.” Merlis has published eighteen books of his own, fifteen about Brooklyn. He had his expertise to protect, and in his review he deemed this new entry “better in a hearth than upon a coffee table or bookshelf,” enumerating a host of mistakes, in the interest of sounding what he called “a note of caution to the uninitiated.” For example, he asserts, “The author calls Williamsburg a fashionable resort until the 1903 opening of the bridge (p. 53), when in actuality its resort days ended by the close of the Civil War.”

The author in question is John Manbeck, who served as the borough’s official historian from 1993 to 2001. Manbeck, like Merlis, is a Brooklyn native. “Fourth generation,” he said last week over breakfast at a diner on Montague Street, in “the Heights,” where he lives. He took his characterization of Williamsburg from the writings of his grandfather, who grew up there. "My wife tells me this is the second Battle of Brooklyn," he said, and then recalled his tenure at Borough Hall, during which he compiled a list of fifty-six recommended resources—and omitted any works by Merlis. "He came to a meeting," Manbeck said. "He stood up and said, 'Why don't you publish a list of my books?' And I just did the usual teacher thing. I said, 'Why don't you put out good books?'" Manbeck reached into a satchel and pulled out his own latest volume, "Historic Photos of the Brooklyn Bridge," which shipped recently. "This is my seventh book," he said. "Brian said that Turner was a vanity press. Well, there are only two authors with his publisher, Israelowitz."

"He's always trying to screw me," Merlis said of Manbeck on the phone the other day, and brought up an old *Times* story in which Manbeck accused Merlis of using material from the Kingsborough Historical Society, which Manbeck founded, without permission or proper attribution. "They told me he was on sabbatical!" Merlis said. "It was late March, and I wasn't going to wait until September." He added, "I think he might have felt upstaged, because I was amassing this huge photo collection and he wasn't doing that much."

Neither man is a trained historian. Manbeck, who has a bushy white beard and a professorial mien, used to teach journalism at Kingsborough Community College, in Manhattan Beach. ("He's a guy who cloaks himself in the robes of academia," Merlis said.) Merlis, who has a shaved head and a goatee, teaches social studies at a high school in Queens. ("He's an amateur," Manbeck said. "He never had an official position. No one ever appointed him.") Merlis retains a thick Brooklyn accent. "I do neighborhoods that aren't, like, all gentrified," he said of his scholarship. "I could come out tomorrow with a 'Park Slope, Then and Now' book and make twenty thousand dollars. But no: I did East Flatbush. I'm doing Canarsie." Merlis's collection of photographs is sufficiently large that he now requires three thousand square feet of space. He has been priced out of Brooklyn—"If I were in Dumbo, I'd need two or three million"—and lives on the south shore of Long Island.

"I have an idea that he doesn't think history is fun," Manbeck said.

"Local history is usually little-old-lady stuff," Merlis said. "I try to add a little salsa."

The current borough historian, a retired science teacher named Ron Schweiger, has thus far chosen to remain neutral in the feud, and told the Brooklyn *Paper* that mistakes happen "even in the best of books."

"I've known Ron a long time," Manbeck said. "I tease him. I said I taught him everything he knows."

"Ronnie just sort of takes the high road," Merlis said. "But when he gets questions, whose phone rings? He calls me."

—Ben McGrath

THE MUSICAL LIFE
PATRIARCH

The ever-expanding Wainwright family of singers will reunite on Tuesday night, at the Highline Ballroom, on West Sixteenth Street. "It's going to be Roche mania! McGarrigle madness!" Loudon Wainwright III, their wayward patriarch, thundered the other day in that raucous, sardonic voice that you hear on his records. He widened his eyes in mock dread at the prospect of one of his exes, Suzzy Roche, and various ex-in-laws, including the singers Maggie, Terre, and David Roche, as well as three of Loudon's four children—Rufus, Martha, and Lucy—all onstage together, performing songs from Wainwright's new CD, "High Wide & Handsome: The Charlie Poole Project." For the Wainwrights, who constitute a kind of singing Glass family in an imaginary musical conceived by Wes Anderson, that would be like Thanksgiving.

On a hot August evening several weeks ago, Wainwright played a smaller gig at the City Winery, on Varick Street, for which he arrived early. (He's always punctual.) The Winery show was one of a hundred he will do this year, his forty-first as a professional folkie. "And I do it all by myself," he said, rubbing the back of his neck, which was sunburned. "I don't have a roadie. I schlep my Martin D-28, just me and my guitar going through airports, from here to there." Is he a happy troubadour? "I mean, I like to do the shows, but the rest of it is Willy Loman time." Wainwright and his third wife, Ritamarie Kelly, live in Los Angeles, mainly to nurture Loudon's acting career. He had minor roles in Judd Apatow's "Knocked Up" and a few other movies, and he has a small part as Barry, the town crank, in the NBC TV series "Parks and Recreation."

Wainwright found refuge from the heat of the day in the Winery's underground cantina. ("I'll have a barrel of the Spanish red!" he exclaimed jauntily, on seeing the casks.) He wore a summery version of what he calls the "preppie psycho-killer look," which has been his trademark since his one hit, "Dead Skunk (In the Middle of the Road)," ruled FM radio, in the summer of 1973—khakis, a mint-green shirt, a rumpled seersucker jacket, and a straw-colored Monroe hat. He said he had been unhappy in prep school (St. Andrew's School, in Middletown, Delaware), but he valued the experience, because, he said, "it gave me a point of view." (S.A.S. also inspired one of Wainwright's best songs, "School Days.") He mentioned proudly that his son had attended the Millbrook School, in Dutchess County (Rufus wrote "Millbrook" about that experience), and that his fourth and youngest child, Alexandra, was about to head off to the Peddie School, in New Jersey.

"She's not a musician yet," Wainwright said, looking relieved. "She's a good student!" But he quickly added that he was delighted by his other children's musical successes.

"Rufus used to open for me. And now . . ."

You could open for him?

"I'm not ready for that yet."

The Charlie Poole Project, conceived by the producer Dick Connette, is a departure for Wainwright, in that most of the songs were originally recorded by Poole, a banjo-playing singer and the leader of the North Carolina Ramblers, a popular Jazz Age act, whose song "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down Blues," of 1925, sold an astonishing hundred and two thousand copies. Like Wainwright, Poole specialized in novelty songs, humor, and drunken bravado; he died after a thirteen-week bender in 1931, at the age of thirty-nine. Because Wainwright's own songwriting has always shown a strong confessional impulse—the most embarrassing details of his failures as a lover, husband, and father are well known to his many fans—channelling Poole came as a relief, he said. "It lets me play a persona and take a break from myself."

Showtime! The place looked full. Occasionally, Wainwright said, there were twenty-five-year-old girls at his shows, probably fans of his kids (or kids of his fans?). "Then I'm, like, 'Jesus! All right!'" That night, however, the audience was pretty solidly gray-haired. Wainwright did his best to inhabit the role of Poole, but Low Preppie Sardonic and High Carolina Lonesome isn't an easy marriage, in spite of the two excellent sidemen—David Mansfield and Chaim Tannenbaum—who were helping to broker it. Maggie Roche came closest to uniting the two strains in a gospel song called "The Great Reaping Day." Then, for the encore, which was "Dead Skunk," Wainwright dropped the Poole persona and became his old self.

Loudon Wainwright III

—*John Seabrook*

DEPT. OF REGENERATION
YOU SAY OYSTER

In "The History of the Colony of Nova Caesaria, or New Jersey," the historian Samuel Smith quotes a letter from an early colonist about the "abundance of brave oysters" populating the local waters. Back then, oyster reefs covered three hundred and fifty square miles of the Hudson-Raritan Estuary. Wild oysters still grow in the area, on old tires, rubble, and boats—though not in anything that could be described as abundance. And they have to be braver than ever to do so: when the first oyster growth projects in New York City were launched, in 1997, the oysters planted in the Gowanus Canal were thought to have been eaten by rats.

Tiffany Medley, a doctoral student in biology at CUNY, has spent two years surveying every cranny of the estuary for signs of wild-oyster colonies, and she has found dozens of sites where oysters have settled, including near the George Washington Bridge. "It was like a miracle to find that," she said the other day.

Medley was a presenter at the Restoring the Urban Oyster conference, on Governors Island, where, earlier this summer, politicians, environmentalists, artists, and other mollusk enthusiasts came together for a series of panels, lunch, and some informal bivalve-themed networking. Topics of conversation ranged from improving oyster habitats (one theory involved using an electric current to stimulate the creation of underwater limestone for the oysters to grow on) to methods of keeping students who are monitoring oysters "from sinking into the muck of Newark Bay." But all the presentations shared a common goal: to provide a "hopeful new beginning for the Eastern oyster, *Crassostrea virginica*," as a handout put it.

Among their many nifty qualities—the ability to change sex, seemingly at random, and to turn a piece of grit into a pearl—oysters act as natural water-purification systems. "Think of oysters as the catalytic converter on your car," Fabien Cousteau, the grandson of Jacques Cousteau, explained. One adult oyster can filter up to twenty-four gallons of water in a day, and so the crew at Governors Island looked at the species less as a delicacy awaiting a dollop of cocktail sauce than as a potential environmental savior for New York Harbor.

Cousteau, an undersea explorer and a self-described "tech weenie," was overseeing a group of teen-agers at the end of a newly built dock on the north end of the island. They were students from the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School, a public high school whose curriculum is organized around bodies of water in the New York area. (They learn celestial navigation alongside algebra.) The kids clustered around a boxlike plywood structure, with tires affixed to its sides and fly mesh instead of a floor. It looked like a woodshop experiment gone wrong, but it was actually a FLUPSY (Floating Upweller System), a piece of commercial oyster-farming equipment that had been built by Peter Malinowski, a young aquaculture teacher at the Harbor School. Malinowski explained that he had grown up on an oyster farm on Fishers Island, and he built the FLUPSY over the course of the previous two months at a floating bar called the Frying Pan, on the Hudson River.

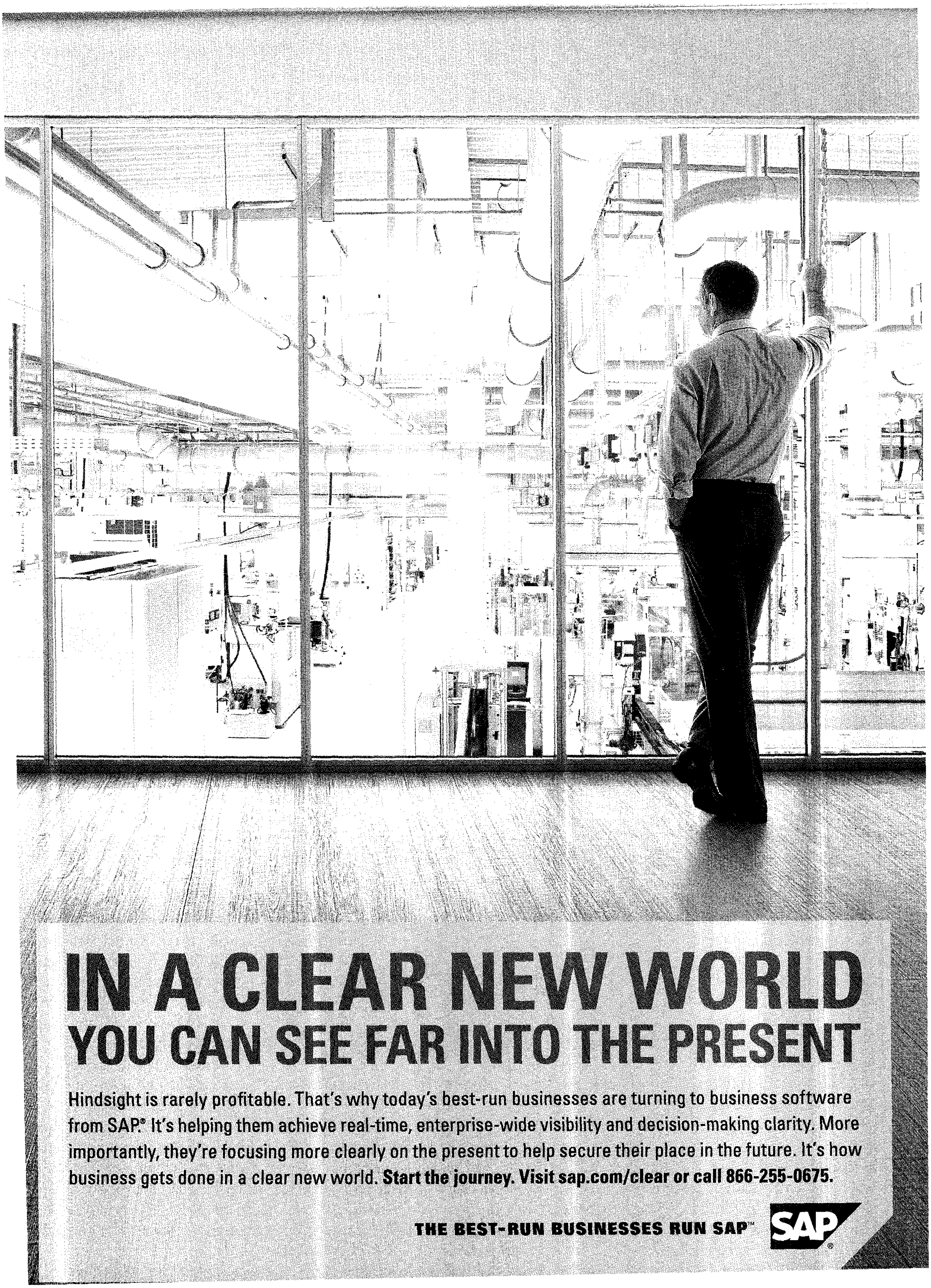
Malinowski held up a bag filled with what looked like Grape-Nuts but were actually a hundred thousand baby oysters, about to be planted in the FLUPSY. Harbor School students will monitor the oysters' growth, and with luck, Malinowski said, adult oysters will be breeding in the Hudson by next summer.

The school's current campus is in Bushwick, Brooklyn, an hour from the closest body of water. (Murray Fisher, the school's founder, recalled that when he told a local that he was starting a Harbor School in the area her response was "Ain't no harbor in Bushwick, sweetie.") But next year the school will move to Governors Island, where it will occupy the former Coast Guard hospital and the small-boat station. Kylel Diggs, a freshman, was excited about the new location—"especially for parent-teacher conferences," he said.

Jennifer Soto, a senior, recalled the only unpleasant memory from her freshman-year Introduction to New York Harbor class: "We had to eat an oyster!" (She had doused hers in lemon juice.) The curriculum, however, won't include any New York Harbor oyster feasts. If the baby oysters do their job removing toxins from the water, they'll be dangerous to eat.

Back on the dock, Cousteau watched as the students milled around the FLUPSY. "We can't use the oceans as an infinite resource *and* as a garbage can," he said, looking out across the harbor. After a moment, he added, "Well, actually, we can't do either."

—*Katherine Stirling*



IN A CLEAR NEW WORLD
YOU CAN SEE FAR INTO THE PRESENT

Hindsight is rarely profitable. That's why today's best-run businesses are turning to business software from SAP.® It's helping them achieve real-time, enterprise-wide visibility and decision-making clarity. More importantly, they're focusing more clearly on the present to help secure their place in the future. It's how business gets done in a clear new world. **Start the journey. Visit sap.com/clear or call 866-255-0675.**

THE BEST-RUN BUSINESSES RUN SAP™

SAP®

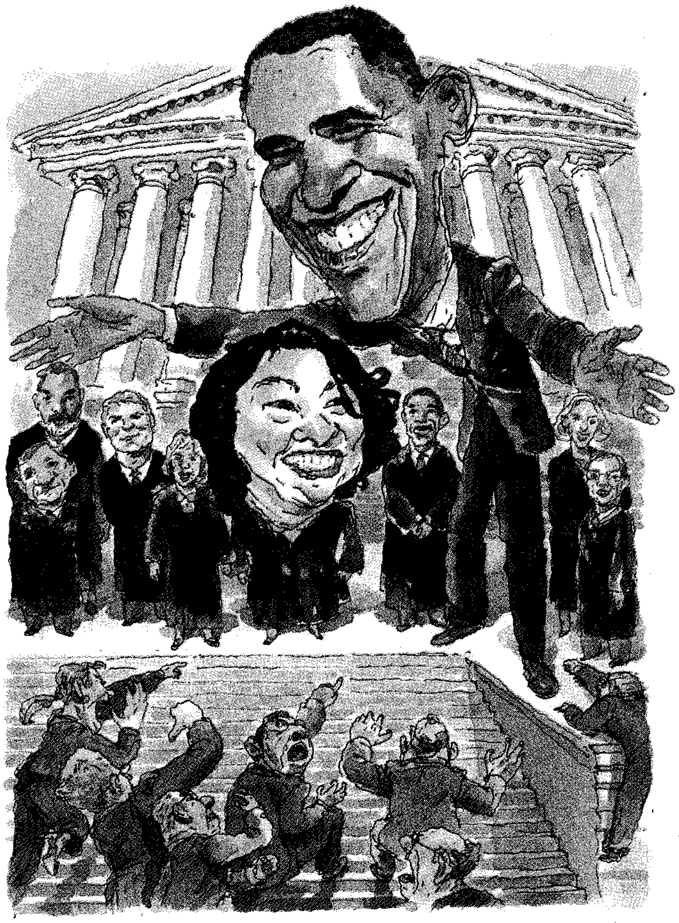
ANNALS OF LAW

BENCH PRESS

Are Obama's judges really liberals?

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

The Obama Administration wanted to send a message with the President's first nomination to a federal court. "There was a real conscious decision to use that first appointment to say, 'This is a new way of doing things. This is a post-partisan choice,'" one White House official involved in the process told me. "Our strategy was to show that our judges could get Republican support." So on March 17th President Obama nominated David Hamilton, the chief federal district-court judge in Indianapolis, to the Seventh Circuit court of appeals. Hamilton had been vetted with care. After fifteen years of service on the trial bench, he had won the highest rating from the American Bar Association; Richard Lugar, the senior senator from Indiana and a leading Republican, was supportive; and Hamilton's status as a nephew of Lee Hamilton, a well-respected former local congressman, gave him deep connections. The hope was that Hamilton's appointment would begin a profound and rapid change in the confirmation process and in the federal judiciary itself.



Sonia Sotomayor may be a template for Obama nominations.

JOHN CUNEO

The power to nominate federal judges is one of the great prizes of any Presidency, and Obama assumed office at a propitious moment. After Democrats won control of the Senate in 2006, the new chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Patrick Leahy, of Vermont, significantly slowed down the confirmation process for George W. Bush's appointees to the federal appeals courts. In addition, many federal judges appointed by President Clinton were waiting for the election of a Democratic President in order to resign. Now vacancies abound. Just eight months into his first term, Obama already has the chance to nominate judges for twenty-one seats on the federal appellate bench—more than ten per cent of the hundred and seventy-nine judges on those courts. At least half a dozen more seats should open in the next few months. There are five vacancies on the Fourth Circuit alone; just by filling those seats, Obama can convert the Fourth Circuit, which has long been known as one of the most conservative courts in the country, into one with a majority of Democratic appointees. On the federal district courts, there are seventy-two vacancies, also about ten per cent of the total; home-state senators of the President's party generally take the lead in selecting nominees for these seats, but Obama will have influence in these choices as well. Seven appeals and ten district judges have been named so far. George W. Bush, in the first eight months of his Presidency, nominated fifty-two. But Obama, unlike Bush in his first year, has had the opportunity to place his first Justice on the Supreme Court, Sonia Sotomayor—and her confirmation has opened up another seat on the Second Circuit court of appeals. Justice John Paul Stevens, who is eighty-nine, has hired only one law clerk for the next Supreme Court term, so a second Obama appointment to the Court may be imminent as well.

"The unifying quality that we are looking for is excellence, but also diversity, and diversity in the broadest sense of the word," another Administration official said. "We are looking for experiential diversity, not just race and gender. We want people who are not the usual suspects, not just judges and prosecutors but public defenders and lawyers in private practice." Yet Hamilton and Sotomayor are the usual suspects—both sitting judges, who had already been confirmed by the Senate. Of Obama's seven nominees to the circuit courts, six are federal district-court judges. The group includes Gerard Lynch, a former Columbia Law School professor and New York federal prosecutor, and Andre Davis, who was nominated to the Fourth Circuit by Bill Clinton. (At the time, Republicans blocked any vote on Davis.) Two of the seven are African-American; two are women; all but one are in their fifties. (None are openly gay.) The one non-judge is Jane Stranch, who has represented labor unions and other clients at a Nashville law firm and is nominated for the Sixth Circuit. They are conventional, qualified, and undramatic choices, who were named, at least in part, because they were seen as likely to be quickly confirmed.

But then, as the first White House official put it, "Hamilton blew up."

Conservatives seized on a 2005 case, in which Hamilton ruled to strike down the daily invocation at the Indiana legislature because its repeated references to Jesus Christ violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment. Hamilton had also ruled to invalidate a part of Indiana's abortion law that required women to make two visits to a doctor before undergoing the procedure. In June, Hamilton was approved by the Judiciary Committee on a straight party-line vote, twelve to seven, but his nomination has not yet been brought to the Senate floor. Some Republicans have already vowed a filibuster. (Republican threats of extended debate on nominees can stop the Democratic majority from bringing any of them up for votes.)

"The reaction to Hamilton certainly has given people pause here," the second White House official said. "If they are going to stop David Hamilton, then who won't they stop?"

Republicans in the Senate have not allowed a vote on any of the other nominees, either. So far, the only Obama nominee who has been confirmed to a lifetime federal judgeship is Sotomayor. The stalemate provides a revealing glimpse of the environment in Washington. Obama advisers (and Democratic Senate sources) aver that all the nominees, even Hamilton, will be confirmed eventually, but contrary to the President's early hope the struggle for his judges is likely to be long and contentious.

"The President did not set a good example when he was in the Senate," Orrin Hatch, the senior Republican senator from Utah, told me, pointing to Obama's votes against the confirmation of John G. Roberts, Jr., and Samuel A. Alito, Jr., to the Supreme Court. "You have to be a partisan ideologue not to support Roberts," Hatch said. "There is a really big push on by partisan Republicans to use the same things that they did against us." Hatch himself, who had voted for Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, and every other Supreme Court nominee in his Senate career, voted against Sotomayor. (The vote for her confirmation was sixty-eight to thirty-one.)

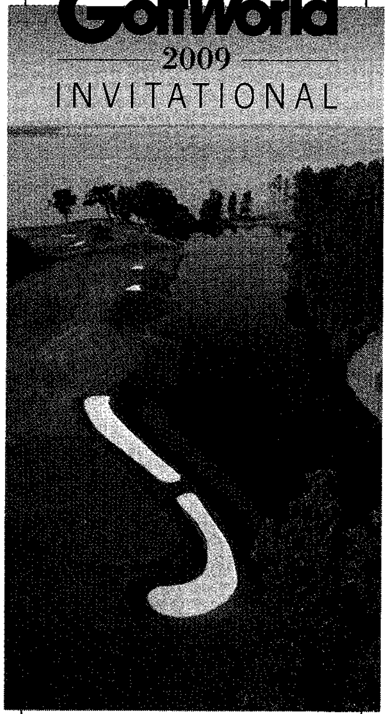
There is a certain irony in this, because Obama has long sought to define himself as something other than a traditional legal liberal. Starting about fifty years ago, after Earl Warren became Chief Justice, the concept of legal liberalism developed a clear meaning: a belief in what came to be called judicial activism. Liberals believed that the Constitution should be read expansively, and that the Supreme Court should recognize newly defined rights—the right, say, to attend an integrated public school, or, later, the right to choose abortion. Conservatives in this era believed in what they called judicial restraint, which suggested that courts should refrain from overruling decisions made by the elected parts of the government. Obama appears to be trying to move away from these old categories, which have, in any case, become scrambled in their meaning. Both sides now claim to embrace restraint and eschew activism.

Obama and his judge-pickers define their choices with the same post-partisan vocabulary that the President uses with most issues: excellence, competence, common sense. And so far Republicans have regarded Obama's claims in this realm with the same skepticism that they have displayed for his arguments on the economy and health care. Still, this is not just a replay of the usual ideological debate. Obama's choice of judges reflects ferment in the world of legal liberalism, which is tied ever more closely to the fate of Democrats in the executive and legislative branches of government. Liberals who once saw judges as the lone protectors of constitutional rights are now placing their hopes on elected politicians like Obama. At its core, Obama's jurisprudence may rest less on any legal theory or nomenclature than on a more primal political skill—the ability to keep winning elections.

Last August, after Obama had clinched the Democratic nomination for President, a lawyer in New York received a confidential assignment from the transition team. Preeta Bansal, who was then a partner at the law firm Skadden, Arps and formerly a solicitor general of New York State, was asked to prepare a series of memorandums about how a President Obama might transform the federal judiciary. She projected the number of likely vacancies, examined the ethnic and professional backgrounds of current

ADVERTISEMENT

GolfWorld
2009
INVITATIONAL



OCTOBER 22-25, 2009
Kingsmill Resort & Spa
Williamsburg, VA

3 Tournament Rounds.
3 Nights Accommodations.
1 Unforgettable Golf Experience.

REGISTER NOW
TO FLY FOR FREE!*

SIGN UP TODAY!
GolfWorldInvitational.com

For more information visit
our website or contact
Ian Fettinger at 212.286.3912

OFFICIAL SPONSORS:
GolfWorld KINGSMILL Resort & Spa
JetBlueChallenge JetBlue
Cleveland GOLF SRIXON
PREFERRED GOLF CLUB

*Based on availablility. Restrictions do apply.

judges, and compiled the first list of possible nominees for the new President to consider.

Through the final weeks of the campaign, Bansal refined and expanded her memos, and after Obama's victory she moved to Washington to work on the transition. There, joined by former campaign staffers, among them Danielle Gray and Michael Strautmanis, Bansal waded into the details of the project. Should Obama announce his first nominations as a group, as Bush did, or one at a time? (Obama chose one at a time.) Should the new Administration coöperate with the American Bar Association, which had traditionally rated nominees but which had been pushed out of the process by recent Republican Administrations? (Obama's team decided to reëstablish the connection, but only after securing a pledge from the A.B.A. that the group would act quickly.) A statistical analysis showed that Republican judicial appointees tended, on balance, to be younger than their Democratic counterparts—a finding that interested the future judge-pickers. (Soon after the Inauguration, the authors scattered: Bansal became general counsel and senior policy adviser at the Office of Management and Budget; Gray joined the staff of Gregory Craig, the White House counsel; and Strautmanis serves as chief of staff to Valerie Jarrett, a senior aide to Obama.)

John Podesta, the White House chief of staff under President Clinton, who was running Obama's transition process, arranged a few meetings for the President-elect to familiarize himself with judicial-selection issues. At one of these sessions, in the transition headquarters, on Sixth Street, the subject was possible Supreme Court vacancies, and Obama made a specific request. He wanted more information on a federal appeals-court judge in New York named Sonia Sotomayor.

It was no surprise that Sotomayor had caught Obama's eye. First appointed to the district court by George H. W. Bush, on the recommendation of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, she had been promoted to the Court of Appeals by Bill Clinton, in 1998. At the time, her confirmation was stalled by Republicans who were concerned, even then, that she might make an appealing Democratic appointee to the Supreme Court. Raised poor in the Bronx, Sotomayor had an inspiring life story, experience as both a prosecutor and a judge, and the potential to be the first Hispanic on the High Court. To those inside the White House who followed the search process after David H. Souter announced his resignation, this spring, Sotomayor was the front-runner all along.

In recent years, the introduction of a Supreme Court nominee has become a major political undertaking. By the time the President announced his choice of Sotomayor, on May 26th, "there were two story tracks—'eminently qualified' and 'an American story,' " an official who was involved with the rollout said. "The first part related to her judicial experience, which was more time as a federal judge than any nominee in a hundred years, but we also raised as a subtext her experience as a big-city prosecutor"—early in her career, Sotomayor was an assistant district attorney in Manhattan. "You always have to worry that a Democrat is going to be called soft on crime, but it's harder to do that if people know she was a big-city prosecutor." The American story related to her childhood, in public housing, followed by her academic success at Princeton and Yale Law School. At the time, several White House officials noted the similarities between Sotomayor's life story and that of Michelle Obama, who also had a working-class upbringing in an inner city and graduated from Princeton, nine years after Sotomayor.

On the question of Sotomayor's ideology—what she stood for—Administration officials used what may become the Obama template. A Supreme Court nomination, almost by definition, raises divisive social issues, like abortion and gay rights, but the White House tried to make Sotomayor sound like a post-partisan figure, much as Obama has tried to position himself. Part of Sotomayor's appeal to Obama was that she was not a law professor or a legal theorist, and on the bench she had written opinions that avoided broad pronouncements and stuck closely to the facts of each case. "Her judicial philosophy was to follow the rule of law, apply it in each case," the official said. "She was not going to be painted as an ivory-tower judge, but a real-world judge. I don't think that she

ALTERNATE TAKE: LEVON HELM

I've been beating my head all day long on the same six lines,
Snapped off and whittled to nothing like the nub of a pencil
Chewed up and smoothed over, yellow paint flecking my teeth.

And this whole time a hot wind's been swatting down my door,
Spat from his mouth and landing smack against my ear.
All day pounding the devil out of six lines and coming up dry

While he drives donuts through my mind's back woods with that
Dirt-road voice of his, kicking up gravel like a runaway Buick.
He asks *Should I come in with that back beat*, and whatever those

Six lines were bothered by skitters off like water in hot grease.
Come in with your lips stretched tight and that pig-eyed grin,
Bass mallet socking it to the drum. Lay it down like you know

You know how, shoulders hiked nice and high, chin tipped back,
So the song has to climb its way out like a man from a mine.

—*Tracy K. Smith*

has an ideology—that's what was so great about her."

Obama himself speaks as if pragmatism were a substitute for ideology, or at least an improvement on it. As he said in an interview with the Detroit *Free Press* in 2008, during the campaign, "When I think about the kinds of judges who are needed today, it goes back to the point I was making about common sense and pragmatism as opposed to ideology. I think that Justice Souter, who was a Republican appointee, Justice Breyer, a Democratic appointee, are very sensible judges. They take a look at the facts and they try to figure out: How does the Constitution apply to these facts? They believe in fidelity to the text of the Constitution, but they also think you have to look at what is going on around you and not just ignore real life."

Still, at times the post-partisan language of the White House sounded a lot like that of traditional judicial conservatism. In a set of talking points released before her confirmation hearing began, in July, the Obama team called Sotomayor "a nonideological and restrained judge." The statement noted that Sotomayor "wrote expressly about the importance of judicial restraint" in her Senate questionnaire when she became a circuit-court judge, and that her opinions "reflect a keen understanding of the appropriate limits of the judicial role."

Sotomayor elaborated on the theme when she testified before the Judiciary Committee. "It's important to remember that, as a judge, I don't make law," she said in her answers to Leahy's first round of questions. "And so the task for me as a judge is not to accept or not accept new theories; it's to decide whether the law, as it exists, has principles that apply to new situations."

Sotomayor's words amounted to an acknowledgment that conservative rhetoric, if not conservative views, had become the default mode for Supreme Court nominees. In the hearings of the two Clinton nominees, Ginsburg and Breyer, in the early nineteen-nineties, both candidates said, essentially, that the meaning of the Constitution had evolved with the times. Ginsburg herself, in her career as a litigator, had been among the first to persuade the Justices to recognize that the Constitution required equal treatment for women. Sotomayor and the Democratic senators who supported her portrayed a much less dynamic process of constitutional change—a fact that was noted by conservative legal scholars. "If you took the hearings we just had, as well as the statements that are being made on the Senate floor, you see a very different dialogue taking place than we saw in connection with Ginsburg or Thomas or Bork or Rehnquist," Leonard A. Leo, the executive vice-president of the Federalist Society, the conservative legal group, said. "It's an acknowledgment of the fact that that's the prevailing and conventional view of what the proper judicial role is in our democratic society. The Democrats said she was a non-ideological, restrained judge. They talked about her judicial modesty. That was language that the Bush White House coined to discuss John Roberts."

Nor did Sotomayor (or her Democratic supporters) offer much more than a tepid defense of the use of racial preferences in affirmative action, another traditional liberal cause. "The Constitution promotes and requires the equal protection of law of all citizens in its Fourteenth Amendment," Sotomayor told the senators. She went on:

> To ensure that protection, there are situations in which race in some form must be considered; the courts have recognized that. It is firmly my hope, as it was expressed by Justice O'Connor in her decision involving the University of Michigan Law School admissions criteria, that in twenty-five years race in our society won't be needed to be considered in any situation.

In the case that drew the most attention during the hearing, Sotomayor had ruled in favor of the city of New Haven, when it voided a promotion exam for firefighters; the results of the test left no African-Americans eligible for promotion, and the city feared a lawsuit charging that New Haven's policies had a "disparate impact." Scarcely any Democrats rose to Sotomayor's defense on the New Haven case, except to say that she had followed existing precedent. "We spent in previous confirmation hearings a very considerable amount of time probing Republican nominees about the extent to which they would entertain disparate-impact claims in the civil-rights arena," Leo said. "One has to assume that the calculation they made was that that is not an issue with which the American people are in agreement with them."

To some degree, the use of conservative language by Sotomayor and her allies was merely an attempt to forestall Republican opposition. (In any case, more than three-quarters of the Republicans in the Senate voted against her.) And it is true that the new Justice appears likely to embrace some traditional liberal positions on legal issues; for example, there is nothing in her background that would suggest any hostility to Roe v. Wade or to abortion rights. In her first case as a Justice, in August, she voted with the Court's three other liberals in an unsuccessful attempt to stop an execution. But the language and substance of Sotomayor's testimony, and the White House's advocacy for her, suggest that the progressive agenda in the Court is not the same as it once was. Not surprisingly, the change is best illustrated by the views and priorities of Barack Obama.

As the outgoing president of the *Harvard Law Review*, in 1991, Obama could have had his pick of judicial clerkships. "I asked him to apply to clerk for me," Abner Mikva, a former federal appeals-court judge in Washington, told me. "I was a feeder. At the time, I was sending clerks to work for Brennan, Marshall, Stevens, and Blackmun. I don't have any doubt that Obama would have got a Supreme Court clerkship if he wanted one."

But Obama decided against taking any clerkship and instead moved back to Chicago, where he joined a small law firm, started teaching law at the University of Chicago, and laid the groundwork for a political career. "He had decided at that point to go back to work in the community that he had worked in as a community organizer," Cassandra Butts, a law-school classmate of Obama's and now his deputy White House counsel, said. "He was very, very clear on that path. He obviously had an incredible number of opportunities to diverge from that path, but he decided that that's what he wanted to do." As Mikva remembered, "He wanted to go back to Chicago, and he wanted politics to be part of the mix."

David Strauss, who was a professor at the law school at the time, told me that Obama "didn't see himself as much as a legal intellectual as a community organizer and a politician. Even when he was teaching at our law school and practicing law, he was a politician—but not in a cheap sense. That's where he saw his future." In 1996, five years after his graduation, Obama won election to the Illinois State Senate, though he kept up his adjunct teaching at Chicago.

In short, Obama chose politics over law. This was a matter of personal preference and temperament, but it also reflected the times. "He came of age at a time when confidence in the judiciary as a vehicle of social change was very low," Geoffrey Stone, who was on the faculty at the University of Chicago when Obama taught there, said. "His generation of lawyers is much less confident of looking to the Court than an earlier one was. In the Rehnquist years, liberals didn't have a lot of confidence in the Court."

By the late eighties, the great activist years of the Warren Court had passed, and there appeared to be little prospect of a revival. When Obama moved back to Chicago, there was only one Democratic appointee on the Supreme Court—Byron White, hardly a liberal, who had been nominated by John F. Kennedy, in 1962. Obama believed that the Supreme Court wouldn't be remaking American society—and probably shouldn't be, either.

Over the years, Obama has expressed admiration for the great liberal Justices of the twentieth century, including William J. Brennan, Jr., and Thurgood Marshall, but he has nearly always distanced himself from their judicial philosophy. In the interview in Detroit last year, Obama described his view of the limits of judicial liberalism. "The Warren Court was one of those moments when, because of the particular challenge of segregation, they needed to break out of conventional wisdom because the political process didn't give an avenue for minorities and African Americans to exercise their political power to solve their problems. So the court had to step in and break that logjam," Obama said, adding, "I would be troubled if you had that same kind of activism in circumstances today."

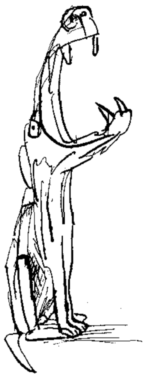
A traditional liberal might see Obama's view of "that kind of activism" as heretical. Over the years, legal liberals in many respects have defined themselves by coming up with new rights for the Supreme Court to recognize. The most famous of these rights was the right to attend an integrated public school, which the Justices established in 1954 and then attempted, with mixed success, to enforce over subsequent decades. Later, thanks to Ginsburg and others, the Justices found that the Constitution generally forbade discrimination on the basis of gender. With Roe v. Wade, they recognized the right to obtain an abortion. Other claims were less successful. In an article in the *Harvard Law Review*, in 1969, Frank I. Michelman, a professor at Harvard, suggested that the Fourteenth Amendment might require a right to economic equality, not just freedom from discrimination. Some scholars posited a constitutional right to

"What flower says you're sorry without admitting wrongdoing?"

housing, or a right to health care. Many liberals tried for years to persuade the Supreme Court to step beyond desegregation orders and direct that public schools be funded equally. In an interview with Chicago public radio in 2001, Obama explained why he believed that approach had failed, citing the case of San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez, in 1973. In Rodriguez, the Court found, by a 5-4 vote, that unequal funding of school districts in the same state did not amount to a violation of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. As Obama described the decision, the Court "basically slaps those kinds of claims down and says, 'You know what—we as a court have no power to examine issues of redistribution and wealth inequalities with respect to schools. That's not a race issue, that's a wealth issue, and we can't get into this.' " The Court said that it was up to legislatures to make judgments about redistribution of wealth, not courts—which was fine with Obama. "Maybe I am showing my bias here as a legislator as well as a law professor," he went on, "but the institution just isn't structured that way."

Nor has Obama shown much enthusiasm for the traditional civil-rights agenda, particularly when it comes to voting rights and affirmative action. Obama taught a course on election law at Chicago, and he used the manuscript of a textbook co-written by Richard Pildes, a law professor then at the University of Michigan and now at New York University. In the early nineties, and even today, most liberals in the field supported the creation of so-called "majority-minority districts"—legislative districts that were gerrymandered to help minority politicians win elections. According to Pildes, Obama was skeptical about African-Americans relying on these districts as the sole route to political success. "He was very different from most younger academics, who had very conventional ways of looking at issues like this one," Pildes told me. "He was very interested in the facts on the ground, how this stuff was really playing out, rather than ideology."

Like Sotomayor in her hearing, Obama has expressed little enthusiasm for group-based affirmative action, the kind practiced by the city of New Haven in the firefighter case. As he notes in his second book, "The Audacity of Hope," "An emphasis on universal, as opposed to race-specific, programs isn't just good policy; it's also good politics." Still, the President is a strong believer in redress for individual, as opposed to group, victims of discrimination; the first bill he signed in office, known as the Lilly Ledbetter Act, overturned a Supreme Court ruling that had restricted the statute of limitations for filing such cases.



There is another reason for Obama's skepticism about court-ordered change: that it distracts liberals and progressives from the hard work of winning elections. In the 2001 interview, he said that one of "the tragedies of the civil rights movement was because the civil rights movement became so court-focused—I think there was a tendency to lose track of the political and community-organizing activities on the ground that are able to put together the actual coalitions of power through which you bring about redistributive change. And in some ways we still suffer from that." Five years later, as a senator and all but declared Presidential candidate, Obama wrote in "The Audacity of Hope" that he had been reluctant to enter the political brawl over President Bush's judicial nominees. "I wondered if, in our reliance on the courts to vindicate not only our rights but also our values, progressives had lost too much faith in democracy," he wrote. "Elections ultimately meant something. . . . Instead of relying on Senate procedures, there was one way to ensure that judges on the bench reflected our values, and that was to win at the polls."

Notwithstanding Obama's protestations, his brand of pragmatism is an ideology, and his reconsideration of what it means to be a judicial liberal has come at the same time as some in the legal academy are examining the same questions. One prominent effort in this vein, which began before Obama even became a candidate for President, has led to a complementary approach to that of the new President.

"The liberal-activist model of the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies said that the Supreme Court would declare that there are rights, and then order the political branches to enforce them," Jack Balkin, a professor at Yale Law School, told me. That approach seemed both unattainable and undesirable to Balkin and Reva Siegel, a colleague at Yale, so they decided to try to rethink the liberal legal agenda. They were inspired in part by a series of memos and speeches that Edwin Meese III, as Ronald Reagan's attorney general in the eighties, had commissioned to articulate a conservative vision for the courts; over the years, the ideas in several of these memos have found their way into Supreme Court precedent. It was Meese, for instance, who first called Washington's attention to the view that the Constitution should be interpreted according to the "original intent" of the Framers, an approach that Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas have brought to the Supreme Court.

The main result of Balkin and Siegel's collaboration is a book, "The Constitution in 2020," published earlier this year, which includes contributions from more than a score of leading progressive law professors—some of whom now work in the Obama Administration. At the core of Balkin and Siegel's concept is the notion that "judges don't own the Constitution." By that, they mean that the Constitution, at any given point in history, is shaped by a broad array of forces, including elected officials, activists, and voters. "The Court decided Brown in 1954, but that didn't settle what 'equal protection of the laws' meant," Balkin said. "Politicians and the civil-rights movement shifted the meaning. Martin Luther King changed it. The Civil Rights Act changed it. The organized right changed the meaning when it reacted to busing. The history of race relations in this country is organized around each side claiming the mantle of Brown. But no one ever has the last word."

As proof of this hypothesis, the authors point to the history of the Second Amendment and gun control. The first clause of the amendment refers to the need for "a well regulated Militia" and the second states that "the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." For many decades, into the nineteen-eighties, it was widely agreed among judges and scholars that the right to bear arms belonged only to militias, and thus the Second Amendment imposed no limits on the ability of states and localities to enact gun-control laws. Warren E. Burger, the former Chief Justice (and no liberal), said that any other view of the law was a "fraud," and Robert Bork, the conservative hero, said much the same thing. But Meese and his allies in the National Rifle Association were indefatigable in pushing an opposing interpretation, and their position became widely adopted, first in the Republican Party and then among many Democrats. Finally, in 2008, the Supreme Court, in an opinion written by Antonin Scalia (who was appointed while Meese was attorney general), struck down a District of Columbia gun-control law as a violation of the Second Amendment. A fringe position—a "fraud"—two decades earlier had become the law of the land. To Balkin, this is an entirely appropriate example of what he, Siegel, and Robert Post, the dean of Yale Law School, call Democratic Constitutionalism. "Conservatives convinced other people that their vision of the Constitution was a better one, they won elections, they appointed their people to the Court," Balkin said. "This is not lawlessness. This is how the system works."

In a way, Democratic Constitutionalism goes back to the origin of the activism-vs.-restraint debate. In the late nineteenth century, a conservative majority on the Supreme Court embraced a kind of activism when it struck down several state and local measures intended to regulate the economy or to protect workers. In the nineteen-thirties, a conservative majority on the Supreme Court struck down several early New Deal measures; in these cases, the Justices ruled that Congress lacked the constitutional authority to launch such federal initiatives as the National Recovery Administration. Franklin D. Roosevelt initially responded to these defeats with his infamous court-packing plan, but in time he was able to appoint Justices who deferred to legislative judgments about how best to address the Depression. In other words, in that era liberals believed in restraint, and conservatives were the activists. (That flipped in the Warren era.) Notably, when Sotomayor was asked her favorite Supreme Court Justice, she named Benjamin Cardozo, who was a leader in fighting the conservative activism of the thirties on the Court.

"What you'll get with Obama is basically Carolene Products—'Leave me alone on economic issues and protect me on civil rights,'" Richard Epstein, the conservative legal scholar who was interim dean of the Chicago Law School when Obama taught there, said. Carolene Products was a 1938 decision, involving skim milk spiked with non-milk fat, in which the Court set up a structure that would shape constitutional law for the next several generations. The Justices gave the elected branches a more or less free hand on economic issues but exercised greater scrutiny of measures that affected minorities. "Obama has nothing much he wants from the courts," Epstein told me. "He wants them to stay away from the statutes he passes, and he wants solidity on affirmative action and abortion. That's it."

As David Strauss observed, "Fighting over the courts is not going to be a high-priority issue for Obama or the Democratic coalition. The Republican coalition cares a lot more about it at this point, because they want the Court to change on issues like abortion, affirmative action, school prayer, gun rights. If the courts stay right where they are, that's fine with the Democrats. The Democratic agenda is more democratically focussed on legislation."

In recent years, thirties-style conservative judicial activism, targeting federal legislation, has been returning to the Court. As Cass Sunstein, a former professor at Harvard Law School, writes in the "2020" collection, "Increasingly, conservatives have been drawn to 'movement judges'—judges with no interest in judicial restraint, with a willingness to rule broadly and a demonstrated willingness to strike down the acts of Congress and state governments. Movement judges have an agenda, which, as it happens, overlaps a great deal with the extreme wing of the Republican Party." Sunstein notes that the Rehnquist Court struck down more than three dozen federal enactments between 1995 and 2004—"a record of aggressiveness against the national legislature that is unequaled in the nation's history."

Last week, after a long delay, Sunstein was confirmed as director of the Office of

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

Emirates "Five Days in Dubai" Sweepstakes

In partnership with Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts and Dubai Tourism

Register now for your chance to win a dream vacation to one of the world's premier destinations.

The journey begins when you step on the plane and continues as you experience all that Dubai has to offer.

Your prize includes:

- Two round-trip economy-class tickets on Emirates, featuring award-winning service, multi-course meals, complimentary wines, and more than 1,200 channels of on-demand entertainment
- Luxurious accommodations for four nights with complimentary breakfast: enjoy two nights at the magnificent Madinat Jumeirah and two nights at the elegant Jumeirah Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa
- A day and evening sightseeing tour, including a desert safari adventure, courtesy of Dubai Tourism

For full rules and to enter, visit newyorkeronthetown.com/emirates.

Fly Emirates. Keep discovering.

Emirates

Jumeirah HOTELS & RESORTS

دائرة السياحة والتسويق التجاري
Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Promotion begins September 13, 2009, at 12:01 A.M. E.S.T., and ends October 16, 2009, at 11:59 P.M. E.S.T. (when all entries must be received). Entrants must be at least 18 years old as of the date of entry. Sweepstakes is open to legal residents of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Employees of Sponsors and their immediate families are not eligible. To enter and for complete rules, go to, www.newyorkeronthetown.com/emirates. The approximate retail value of the prize is $5,658.30. Blackout dates apply. Sponsors of this sweepstakes are Condé Nast Publications, 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036, and Emirates, 55 East 59th Street, 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10022. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received.

Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget. Dawn E. Johnsen, another contributor, has been waiting for months for a Senate vote on her nomination as an assistant attorney general. Harold Hongju Koh, who was the dean of Yale Law School and another writer in the collection, was recently confirmed, also after a long delay, as legal adviser to the State Department. The trouble that these outspoken academics have had in winning confirmation for Administration posts offers another augury of major battles ahead if Obama nominates any of them, or anyone like them, for judgeships.

The Roberts Court, in addition to striking down the D.C. gun-control law, invalidated school-integration plans undertaken by local governments in Seattle and Louisville, and rejected part of the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance law. In an oral argument last week, in a case involving a film critical of Hillary Clinton, the Court appeared poised to strike down another part of the same law. An Obama Court would almost certainly defer more to congressional and other legislative judgments. "You start with the premise that the political branches are the first line of defense of constitutional rights," Balkin said. "If you think that health care is a very important right that people should enjoy, you think that the best way to enforce it is for Congress to pass a law and the President to sign it. This is a very different model from the late sixties." Obama's ambitious legislative agenda, combined with his stated devotion to judicial restraint, signals an approach in synch with this ideology.

During the campaign, Obama criticized George W. Bush for his aggressive use of the powers of the Presidency, particularly regarding the treatment of military detainees. Obama and other liberals saluted the Supreme Court's decisions, in the Hamdan and Boumediene cases, which rejected Bush Administration proposals regarding Guantánamo Bay. But, like most Presidents, Obama has now embraced a more robust conception of executive power than some traditional liberals would prefer. He has issued signing statements, noting his objections to certain legislation on constitutional grounds; he has expressed a willingness to create a system for trying detainees that offers fewer protections than criminal trials do; and his Administration has invoked the state-secrets privilege to keep information away from torture victims who have filed lawsuits. In these areas, Obama has taken less aggressive positions than the Bush Administration did, but the difference is of degree, not of kind.

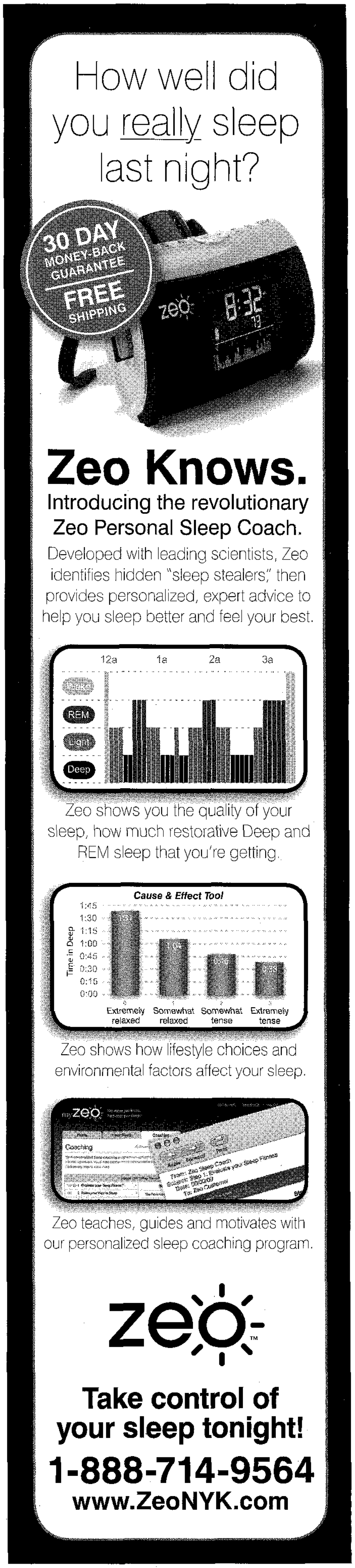
In some respects, Democratic Constitutionalism, or the Obama version of it, still looks much like traditional liberalism. The deference to the will of the people will go only so far. If, for example, a state legislature were to ban all abortions, there would be little hesitation on the part of most liberals to strike that action down. Same-sex marriage, which many liberals favor, presents a similar dilemma, although Balkin can fit the current struggles into his template. "Same-sex marriage right now is a collaboration, where sometimes courts are leading, like in Massachusetts, and sometimes in other states the courts are teeing up the question and forcing the attention of the polity on it," he said. "But courts can only push so far out against what the people believe. They can lead, but they have to get some degree of take-up from the legislature, or nothing is going to change."

As Obama has said, the role of the Court is sometimes specifically to confront—not ratify—the will of the majority. "One of the roles of the courts is to protect people who don't have a voice. That's the special role of that institution," Obama said in Detroit. "The vulnerable, the minority, the outcast, the person with the unpopular idea, the journalist who is shaking things up. That's inherently the role of the court. And if somebody doesn't appreciate that role, then I don't think they are going to make a very good justice."

This is the paradox of the judiciary—that unelected judges must protect democratic values. Obama's belief that judges reflect the prevailing political environment raises a paradox of its own. He is launching his nominees into an atmosphere that is so poisoned that scarcely anyone can get confirmed. As one of his advisers said, "Post-partisanship has not yet arrived in judicial selection, or in anything else." ♦

NEWYORKER.COM/GO/ASK

Jeffrey Toobin takes questions in a live chat.



How well did you really sleep last night?

30 DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE FREE SHIPPING

Zeo Knows.

Introducing the revolutionary Zeo Personal Sleep Coach.

Developed with leading scientists, Zeo identifies hidden "sleep stealers," then provides personalized, expert advice to help you sleep better and feel your best.

Zeo shows you the quality of your sleep, how much restorative Deep and REM sleep that you're getting.

Zeo shows how lifestyle choices and environmental factors affect your sleep.

Zeo teaches, guides and motivates with our personalized sleep coaching program.

zeo™

Take control of your sleep tonight!

1-888-714-9564

www.ZeoNYK.com

SHOUTS & MURMURS

ATTENTION, PEOPLE OF EARTH

BY PAUL SIMMS

We are on our way to your planet. We will be there shortly. But in this, our first contact with you, our "headline" is: We do not want your gravel.

We are coming to Earth, first of all, just to see if we can actually do it. Second, we hope to learn about you and your culture(s). Third—if we end up having some free time—we wouldn't mind taking a firsthand look at your almost ridiculously bountiful stores of gravel. But all we want to do is look.

You're probably wondering if we mean you harm. Good question! So you're going to like the answer, which is: We mean you no harm. Truth be told, there is a faction of us who want to completely annihilate you. But they're not in power right now. And a significant majority of us find their views abhorrent and almost even barbaric.

But, thanks to the fact that our government operates on a system very similar to your Earth democracy, we have to tolerate the views of this "loyal opposition," even while we hope that they never regain power, which they probably won't (if the current poll tracking numbers hold up).

By the way, if we do take any of your gravel, it's going to be such a small percentage of your massive gravel supply that you probably won't even notice it's gone.

You may be wondering how we know your language. We are aware that there's a theory on your planet that we (or other alien species from the far reaches of the galaxy) have been able to learn your language from your television transmissions. This is not the case, because most of us don't really watch TV. Most of our knowledge about your Earth TV comes from reading Zeitgeisty think pieces by our resident intellectuals, who watch it not for fun but for ideas for their print articles about how Earth TV holds a mirror up to Earth society, and so on. We mean, we'll watch Earth TV sometimes—if it happens to be on already—but, generally, we prefer to read a good book or revive the lost art of conversation.

Sadly, Earth TV is like a vast wasteland, as the Earthling Newton Minow once said. But, for those of you who can understand things only in TV terms, just think of us as being very similar to Mork from Ork, in that he was a friendly, non-gravel-wanting alien who visited Earth just to find out what was there, and not to harvest gravel.

Speaking of a vast wasteland, you might want to start picking out and clearing off a place for our spacecraft to land. Our spacecraft, as you will see shortly, is huge. Do not be alarmed; this does not mean that each one of us is that much bigger than each one of you. It's just that there were so many of us who wanted to come that we had to build a really huge spacecraft.

So, again, no cause for alarm.

(Full disclosure: each of us actually is much bigger than each of you, and there's nothing we can do about it. So please don't use any of your Earth-style discrimination against us. This is just how we are, and it's not our fault.)

Anyway, re our spacecraft: it's kind of gigantic. The deceleration thrusters alone are sort of, like . . . well, imagine four of your Vesuvius volcanoes (but bigger), turned upside down.

We don't want to hurt anyone, so, if you could just clear off one continent, we think we can keep unintended fatalities to a minimum. Australia would probably work. (But don't say Antarctica. Because we'd just melt it, and then you'd all end up underwater. Which would make it virtually impossible for us to learn about your hopes and your dreams, and your culture, and to harvest relatively small, sample-size amounts of your gravel, just for scientific study.)

A little bit about us: our males have two penises, while our females have only one. So, gender-wise, if you use simple math, we're pretty much identical to you.

And, as far as protocol goes, we're a pretty informal species. If you want to put together a welcoming ceremony with all your kings and queens and Presidents and Prime Ministers and leading gravel-owners, that's fine. But please don't feel like you have to.

Technically, it would be possible for us to share our space-travel technology with you, so that you could build a spacecraft and travel to our planet also. But, for right now, it just feels like it would be better if we came to your place.

Speaking of gravel, one thing we can't tell from our monitoring of Earth is how your gravel tastes. It's just something we're curious about, for no real reason. Is it salty? It looks salty.

Maybe you could form a commission of scientists/gravel-tasters to look into this and let us know. Just have them collect all the gravel you have and put it in one big pile. (There are some pretty big empty parts of Utah, New Mexico, and Russia that might be good spots for such a large gravel pile, but that's just an F.Y.I.)

Then, if you could have your top scientists/gravel-tasters go through this gravel pile, tasting each and every piece, that would be great. Also, if it's not too much of a hassle, have them put all the saltier-tasting pieces in a separate pile.

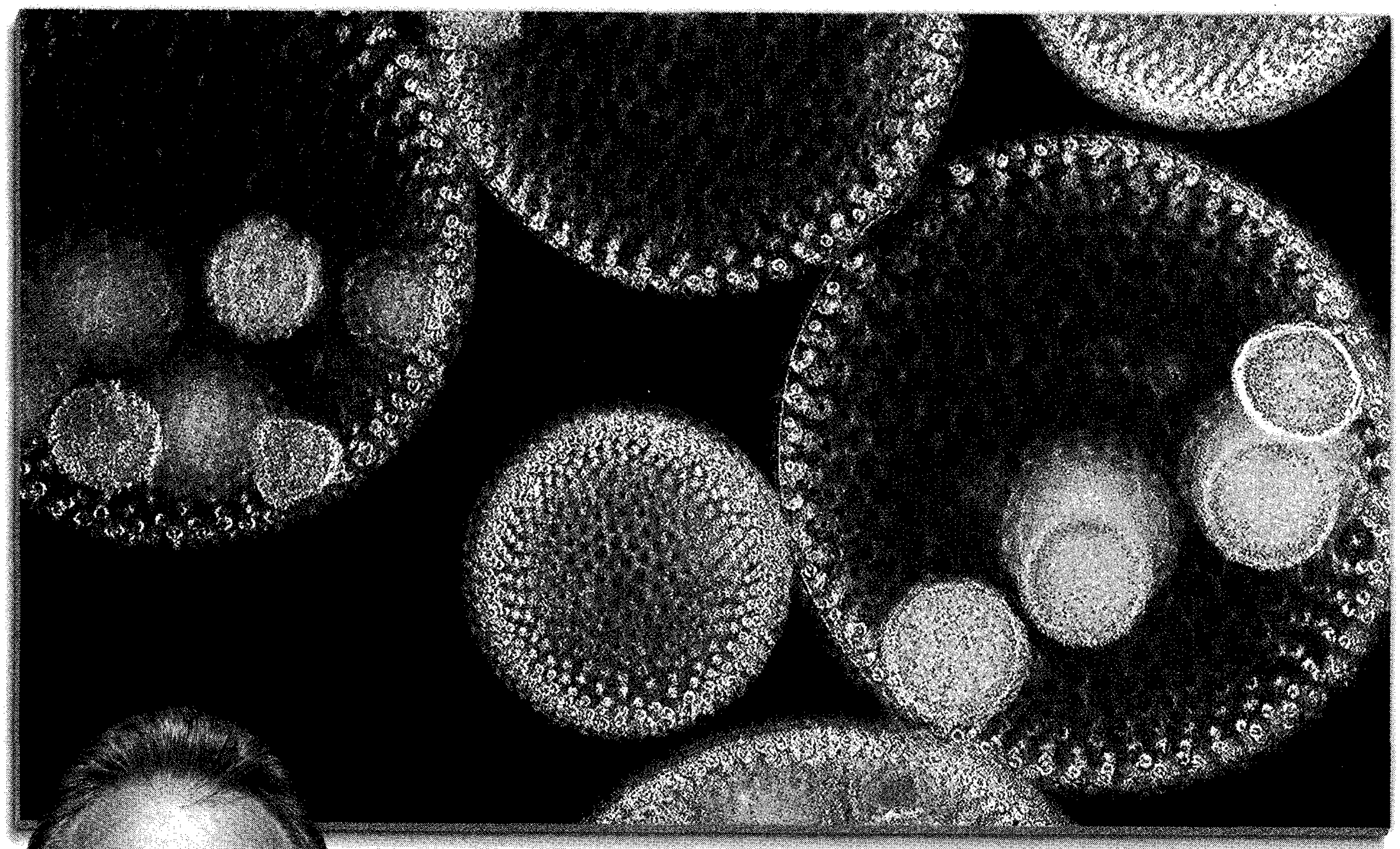
Anyway, that about wraps up this transmission! Looking forward to seeing you very soon. (Sorry we couldn't have given you more notice, but we didn't want you Earth people going crazy and looting stuff and having sex in the streets out of panic about losing all your delicious gravel, which is something that is definitely not going to happen, because, when it comes down to it, what is gravel really but just a bunch of baby rocks?)

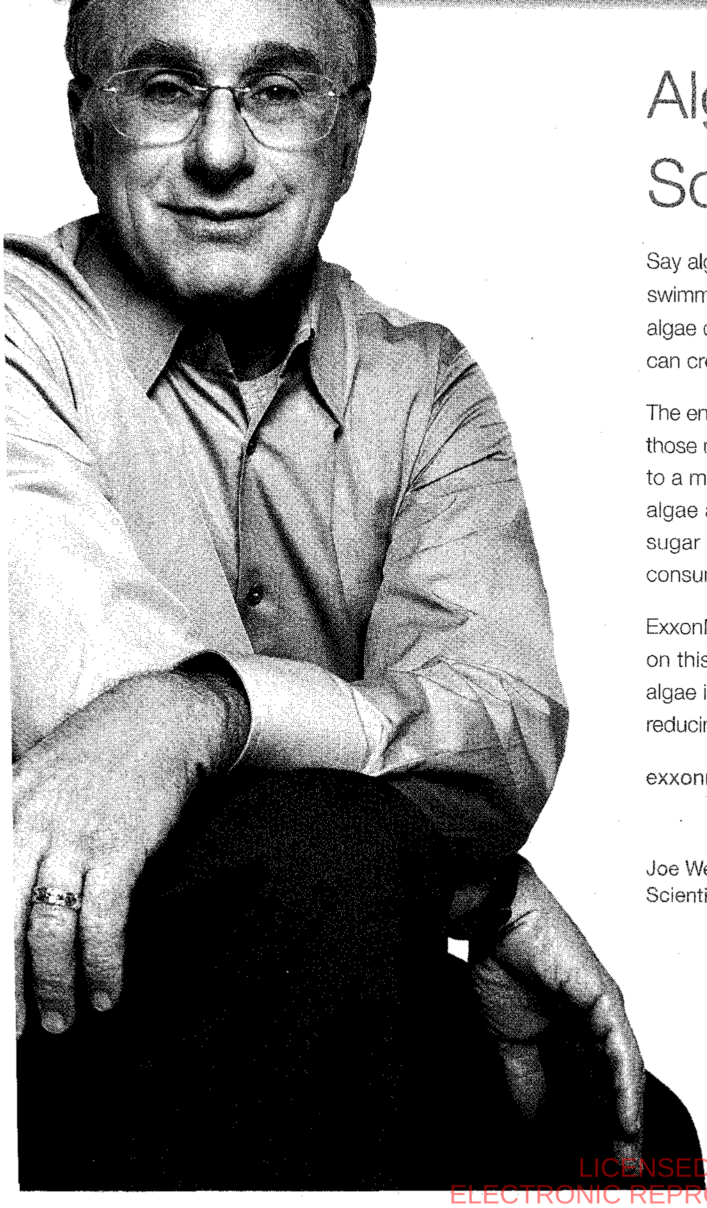
Our E.T.A. on Earth is sometime in the next four hundred and fifty to five hundred years, which we know is a blink of an eye in your Earth time, so start getting ready! Let's have fun with this.

Yours,

A Species from a Galaxy You Haven't Even Noticed Yet

P.S.—We saw that you sent some people to your moon recently. Good job! But, just to let you know, don't waste your time with the moon. There's no gravel there. We already checked. ♦





Algae-powered cars: Science fiction or science?

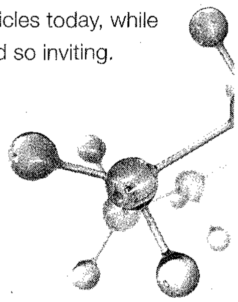
Say algae, and most people think of those unpleasant green organisms found in swimming pools and fish tanks. But to the scientists and engineers of ExxonMobil, algae conjure something far more appealing: Opportunity. Why? Because algae can create renewable energy while absorbing CO_2.

The energy from algae might someday produce biofuels that are compatible with those made from conventional crude oil. That's why ExxonMobil is committed to a major long-term research and development program aimed at developing algae as a viable fuel source. Unlike other biofuel sources such as corn and sugar cane, algae do not compete with our food supply. And because they consume CO_2, algae could help reduce greenhouse gases.

ExxonMobil is joining with Synthetic Genomics Inc., pioneers in biotechnology, on this groundbreaking research effort. Our goal is to produce biofuels from algae in the future to supplement the fuels we use in our vehicles today, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Algae have never looked so inviting.

exxonmobil.com

Joe Weissman
Scientist



EXXON Mobil
Brands of ExxonMobil

ExxonMobil
Taking on the world's toughest energy challenges.™

The Fastest Way to Learn a Language. Guaranteed.

Rosetta Stone® brings you a complete language-learning solution, wherever you are: at home, in-the-car or on-the-go. You'll learn quickly and effectively, without translation or memorization. You'll discover our method, which keeps you excited to learn more and more.

- You'll experience **Dynamic Immersion®** as you match real-world images to words spoken by native speakers so you'll find yourself engaged and learn your second language like you learned your first.
- Our proprietary **Speech Recognition Technology** evaluates your speech and coaches you on more accurate pronunciation. You'll speak naturally.
- Only Rosetta Stone has **Adaptive Recall**,™ *that brings back material to* help you where you need it most, for more effective progress.
- And Rosetta Stone includes **Audio Companion™** so that you can take the Rosetta Stone experience anywhere you use a CD or MP3 player.

Innovative software. Immersive method. Complete mobility. It's the total solution. Get Rosetta Stone—**The Fastest Way to Learn a Language. Guaranteed.**®

SAVE 10%!

100% GUARANTEED
SIX-MONTH MONEY-BACK

Level 1	Reg.	~~$259~~	NOW	$233
Level 1&2	Reg.	~~$419~~	NOW	$377
Level 1,2&3	Reg.	~~$549~~	NOW	$494

©2008 Rosetta Stone Ltd. All rights reserved. Offer applies to Personal Edition only. Patent rights pending. Offer cannot be combined with any other offer. Prices subject to change without notice. Six-Month Money-Back Guarantee is limited to product purchases made directly from Rosetta Stone and does not include return shipping. Guarantee does not apply to an online subscription or to Audio Companion purchased separately from the CD-ROM product. All materials included with the product at the time of purchase must be returned together and undamaged to be eligible for any exchange or refund.

Call
(877) 370-0674
Online
RosettaStone.com/nys099

Use promotional code nys099 when ordering.
Offer expires December 31, 2009.

RosettaStone®

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

THE MASK OF DOOM

A nonconformist rapper's second act.

BY TA-NEHISI COATES

I first heard the rapper Daniel Dumile (pronounced DOOM-ee-lay) when I was fourteen and hip-hop was just beginning to bloom. The music was not so much "CNN for black people," as Chuck D would later dub it, as a lingua franca. I came up awkward in West Baltimore—a tall black boy with no jumper, no gear, and no game. But my mastery of the arcane verses of X-Clan, my sense that the decoupling of EPMD was an irreparable tragedy, and my abiding hatred of Vanilla Ice ushered me into the scowling ranks of my generation.

In those days, you could tune in to "Yo! MTV Raps" and see everything from the gangsta stylings of N.W.A. to the mysticism of Rakim and the goofy musings of the Afros. This was the heyday of sampling—most rap was too small for lawsuits—and a hard-ass beat could come from anything: the opening piano riff from Otis Redding's "Hard to Handle," the horns from Inspector Gadget's theme song, a hook from "Schoolhouse Rock."

Dumile was typical of that motley generation. Performing under the name Zev-love X, he made his début in 1989 with a verse on a song called "The Gas Face," the second single by the group 3rd Bass. In the video, an assortment of hip-hop royalty gives "the gas face" (a maneuver that involves shaking your face in a slack-jawed manner, while moaning) to Adolf Hitler, the South African President P. W. Botha, and the mainstream rapper MC Hammer. Dumile, who was eighteen years old when the video was made, wears a gas-station attendant's uniform and a baseball cap cocked to the side. His babyish face seems to shrink behind a pair of oversized glasses.

Two years later, as a member of the group KMD, Dumile released the album "Mr. Hood." It was uneven, notable mostly for the cult hit "Peach Fuzz" ("By the hairs of my chinny chin chin, gots many plus plenty / String by string, I think I counts like twenty"). Dumile's style is vibrant and freewheeling; he skates over the beat, undisturbed by guitar and piano riffs, sliding words into the empty spaces between the snare and the kick drums. "At the time, it was people coming out everywhere," he told me recently. "It was 'Such-and-such over there is live. Such-and-such over here is live.' And we were all going hard. It was slightly competitive, and everyone was blowing before us. We were kind of the fringe group. It was like, 'You know about KMD, yo?' "

KMD never got the chance to blow up. In 1993, Dumile's brother Dingilizwe, also a member of KMD and known as Subroc, was hit by a car and killed. Later that year, KMD's label, Elektra, refused to release the group's second album, "Black Bastards," fearing a controversy over the cover art (a Sambo figure being sent to the gallows). The group left the label, just as rap's commercial appeal was becoming undeniable. Artists like Snoop, Tupac, and Dr. Dre were going multi-platinum, and by the end of the decade rap had gone from American cult music to American pop music.

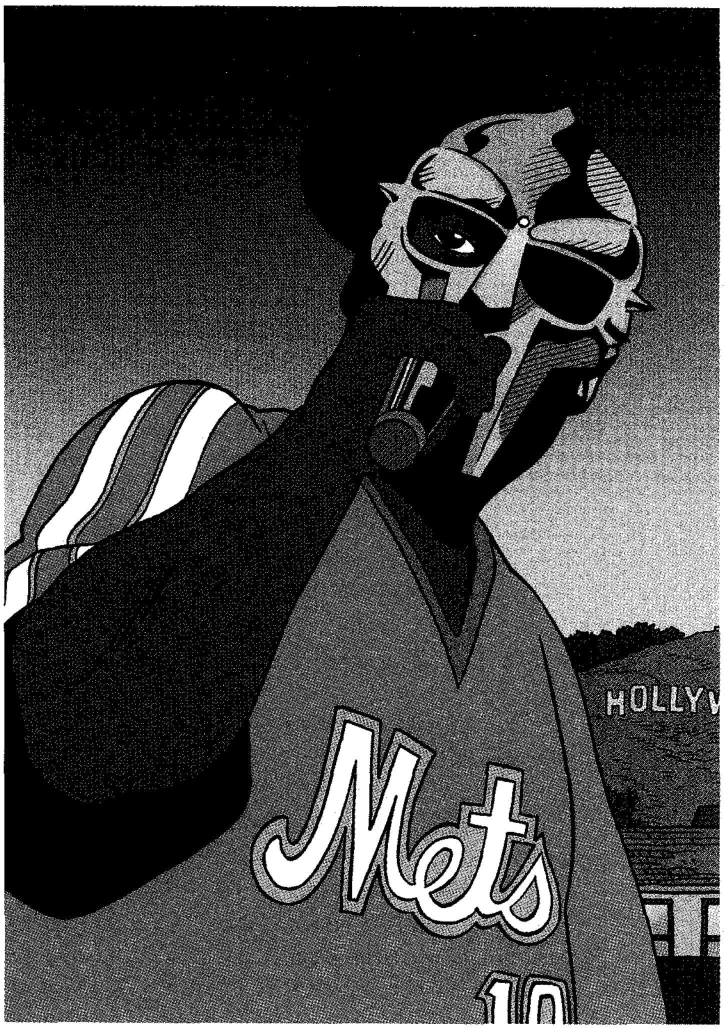
Meanwhile, I kept the assembled works of Wu-Tang Clan on repeat and stewed, convinced that somewhere around 1998 hip-hop had run out of things to say. I was not alone. Disaffected music fans began to refer to the halcyon days of the eighties and nineties—when every rapper had a d.j., and label owners didn't vamp in videos, confusing themselves with artists—as "the Golden Era."

We were the kind of fundamentalists that haunt every genre of popular music. By the end of the nineties, we had started seeking a sound that offered something other than guns, girls, and drugs. Some of us found neo-soul. Others got lost in our parents' jazz records. And still others were radicalized and turned to U2 and Björk.

Dumile vanished from the national

scene and began living as a civilian in New York City. He had a child. "I was just doing regular stuff, just raising my son," he told me.

Then, in 1999, Dumile released a solo record, "Operation: Doomsday," under the moniker Metal Face Doom. His verbal agility was intact, and his lyrics had grown more sinister. There was a mean streak to his humor, and he made references to the death of his brother ("On Doomsday—ever since the womb, till I'm back where my brother went / That's what my tomb will say"). And something else—Dumile, in the guise of MF Doom, did literally what most rappers only do metaphorically: he wore a mask.



Doom explains his mask as an effort to "control the story."

JAIME HERNANDEZ

A rap album is an autobiographical comic book, whose author styles himself as a twisted, oft put-upon antihero. Carlton Ridenhour, a Long Island native who studied graphic design in college, picked up a mike and became Chuck D, an enemy of the state, a revealer of racist conspiracies, a militant watched by the F.B.I. Christopher Wallace was morbidly obese and, by his own assessment, "black and ugly as ever," but when he became Biggie Smalls he transformed himself into a Lothario whose hits, like "One More Chance," portrayed him as a prolific cuckold artist—"Where you at flipping jobs, playing car-notes? / While I'm swimming in your women like the breaststroke." At various moments, the rapper Nas billed himself as Nasty Nas (corner seer), Nas Escobar (gangsta drug kingpin), and Nastradamus (sanctimonious, persecuted celebrity).

When Dumile began performing as MF Doom, he extended hip-hop's obsession with façades. While other m.c.s fashioned themselves after outlaws, thugs, or drug dealers, Dumile, whose handle is inspired by the Fantastic Four villain Dr. Doom, called himself "the Supervillain." When he raps, he often refers to Doom in the third person. Other m.c.s are obsessed with machismo; Dumile is obsessed with "Star Trek" and "Logan's Run."

When I rediscovered Dumile, in his new guise, I was on the cusp of fatherhood and life-partnership, and considering divorce from the music of my youth. My outlook was that of any Golden Age proponent—I was worn down by the petty beefs between rappers, by the murders of Tupac and Biggie, and by the music's assumption of all the trappings of the celebrity culture in which it now existed.

Doom's music was revanche, and the Doom persona felt as though it had emerged from the graveyard of rappers murdered by glam-hop. Onstage, Doom looked the part. He cultivated a dishevelled aspect—ill-fitting white tees or throwback Patrick Ewing jerseys. His paunch gently rebelled against the borders of his shirt. He was visibly balding. His manner suggested a retired B-boy tossing off the trappings of domesticity for one last boisterous romp.

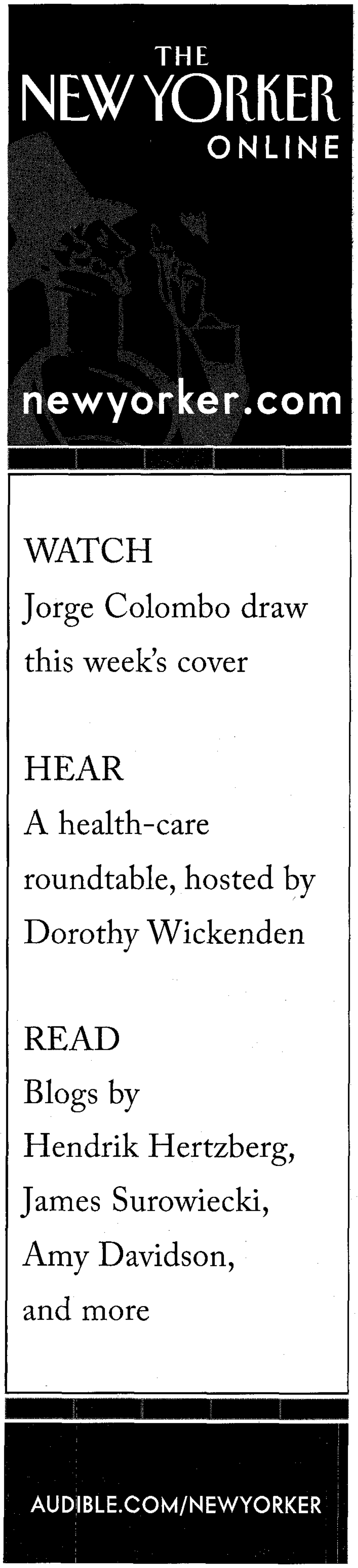
The mask "came out of necessity," Dumile explained. It was a warm afternoon in Atlanta, where he lives now, and we were sitting in black vinyl chairs in an alley in midtown. Dumile wore a green polo shirt, matching green shorts, a pair of black Air Jordans without socks, and a New York Mets cap. His glasses were missing a lens and sat crooked on his face. He removed the Mets cap and placed it on his knee.

Dumile, who is now thirty-eight, was raised on Long Island, home of several prominent rap groups of the Golden Era—De La Soul, Public Enemy, EPMD, and Leaders of the New School. He started performing during the infancy of hip-hop, when no one had yet realized the potential for big money in a guy talking into a microphone.

"Rhyming wasn't that popular back then, but it was fun," Dumile told me. "And people would say, 'Oh, you rhyme? Oh, snap, say a rhyme for me! Say another one! Say the one about the girl!' Everybody had a cousin who came out for the summer and could rhyme. And you'd be like, 'Oh, he rhymes? Oh, he rhymes? I gotta meet him.'

"Ever since third grade, I had a notebook and was putting together words just for fun," Dumile went on. "I liked different etymologies, different slang that came out in different eras. Different languages. Different dialects. I liked being able to speak to somebody and throw it back and forth, and they can't predict what you're going to say next. But once you say it they're always like, 'Oh, shit!' "

For MF Doom, Dumile wanted to create a character with a complete backstory, which he would reference through a series of albums. "The story was coming together, and it worked and became popular. And now people wanted to see


THE NEW YORKER ONLINE

newyorker.com

WATCH
Jorge Colombo draw
this week's cover

HEAR
A health-care
roundtable, hosted by
Dorothy Wickenden

READ
Blogs by
Hendrik Hertzberg,
James Surowiecki,
Amy Davidson,
and more

AUDIBLE.COM/NEWYORKER

shows, and I'm like, how do I do that?

"I wanted to get onstage and orate, without people thinking about the normal things people think about. Like girls being like, 'Oh, he's sexy,' or 'I don't want him, he's ugly,' and then other dudes sizing you up. A visual always brings a first impression. But if there's going to be a first impression I might as well use it to control the story. So why not do something like throw a mask on?"

Or throw the mask on someone else—Dumile routinely sends out one of his comrades in the Doom costume and has him lip-sync the entire show. He sees this as a logical extension of the Doom idea. Fans who have paid for tickets tend to disagree. Across the Internet there are videos of imposters—"Doomposters"—being booed off the stage, with comments posted like "I waited an hour for this bullshit," or "This shit is tenfold worse than Ashlee Simpson or Milli Vanilli."

If Dumile had his way, he would take it further. He jokes that he'd like to dart backstage after a performance, take off the mask, and then wade into the crowd—beer in hand—and applaud his own work. In conversations with strangers, if the subject of Doom comes up, Dumile will simply play along, like Peter Parker or Bruce Wayne.

"I'm the writer, I'm the director," Dumile said. "If I was to go out there without the mask on, they'd be like, 'Who the fuck is this?' " He went on, "I might send a white dude next. Whoever plays the character plays the character . . . I'll send a Chinese nigger. I'll send ten Chinese niggers. I might send the Blue Man Group."

Dumile has released seven albums since "Operation: Doomsday." Most of them have been under the name MF Doom, but he has also used semi-related personas like Viktor Vaughn (inspired by Dr. Doom's real name in Marvel comics) and King Geedorah (the three-headed monster in Godzilla movies). The most highly regarded of his recent albums is "Madvillainy" (2004), a collaborative effort between Dumile and the Los Angeles-based underground producer Madlib. (The duo dubbed themselves "Madvillain.") The album's production was minimalist, like much of Doom's solo work. A great hip-hop producer can hear music that spans many genres and assemble it, in bits, into a coherent aesthetic—and Madlib has an ear for samples ready-made to be looped. But the album's singular sound came mostly from Doom's raspy baritone rendering a sort of nerdcore poetry: "Off pride, tykes, talk wide through scar-meat / Off sides, like how Worf ride with Star-Fleet."

One Friday in April, I flew out to meet Dumile in Los Angeles, where he was working on his next project, a second collaboration with Madlib. He planned to work the first night, and offered to let me watch the session. But he was running late, and we settled on simply having dinner and starting up on Saturday.

From that point, the weekend took on the feel of juvenile fantasy. My hotel, in West Hollywood, looked like a set from "Entourage." On Friday evening it became a night club, and in order to get back to my room I had to present my key to two people manning a velvet rope. Behind the reception desk, a woman lounged on a bed perched in an elevated alcove.

When I called Dumile the next morning, he offered to send his driver and cohort, Five (named for Johnny Five, the robot from "Short Circuit"), to pick me up at the hotel at one o'clock. By two, I hadn't heard anything, so I picked up a book and headed downstairs.

The party had started early. There was a d.j. playing MP3s from his laptop a few yards from the pool. Women in bikinis wandered out from the deck into the lobby. Anxious young men in shorts filed in from the entrance. It was exactly what I would have wanted all my Saturdays to be like when I was sixteen. Except that almost everyone was white.

I spotted Five at a table drinking a Bloody Mary. Short and bespectacled, with a long ponytail, he waved happily as I approached. "Doom didn't give me your number," he explained. He did not look as though he'd been trying hard to rectify the problem.

We got into his black Chevy Avalanche and drove down Sunset, presumably to see Dumile at work. But there was much to be done before that. We stopped at Amoeba Records to pick up Doom's new album, "Born Like This," since Dumile had not yet heard the finished product. We had to pick up beer, too, a necessity for the transition from Dumile to Doom. We had to wait for forty-five minutes in front of the house north of downtown where Dumile was staying.

NEW YORKER
Festival
October 16|17|18

SHOP BananaRepublic.com 1.888.BRSTYLE
The_Trench
BANANA REPUBLIC

10TH
FESTIVAL
10TH
2009
10TH
FESTIVAL
10TH
ORKER
NEW YORKER
FESTIVAL
NE
ES

Welcome to **The New Yorker Festival**

In 2000, *The New Yorker* commemorated its seventy-fifth anniversary with a weekend-long celebration of arts and ideas—the first New Yorker Festival. Every year since then, the Festival has brought together some of the world's most talented and distinguished writers and poets, statesmen and scientists, filmmakers and playwrights, artists and architects, designers, musicians, actors, comics, and chefs. This year, the Festival's tenth, the tradition continues, from October 16th through October 18th, with another eclectic lineup of cultural leading lights.

Fiction Night returns on Friday, with paired readings by *New Yorker* fiction writers, among them Colson Whitehead, Junot Díaz, and Mary Gaitskill. Also on Friday, five *New Yorker* writers will share anecdotes about life at the magazine, in an event co-presented by the storytelling group the Moth. And a special concert will showcase some of the most exciting new artists from the Brooklyn music scene.

The Festival continues on Saturday, with interviews, panels, talks, and screenings. The television anchor Rachel Maddow, the Hollywood hit-maker Tyler Perry, and the author Annie Proulx, among others, will sit down with *New Yorker* writers and editors. Panel discussions will assemble character actors, math whizzes, and advertising gurus. And *New Yorker* film critics will screen overlooked gems of the cinema. At night, we'll be joined by Tilda Swinton, James Franco, Neko Case, Loudon Wainwright III, and many others.

The Festival concludes on Sunday, with excursions, talks, and amusements, including a citywide interactive game based on *New Yorker* trivia. Also on Sunday: a panel on the future of opera, a Humor Revue featuring many of the magazine's humorists, and a new series called Kaffeeklatsch, which will provide an informal setting for *New Yorker* writers and artists. Throughout the weekend, there will be encore appearances by previous Festival participants, including the singer-songwriter Steve Earle, the painter and photographer Chuck Close, and the sleight-of-hand master Ricky Jay.

Whether you are a New Yorker Festival veteran or a curious newcomer, we hope you'll join us for our tenth year. Please read on for more information. (A complete schedule of events can be found on page 21 of the guide.)

All programming is subject to change. For up-to-date information, please visit newyorker.com/festival. Tickets available at 12 noon E.T. on September 18th, at newyorker.com/festival or by calling 800-440-6974. Tickets will also be sold during Festival weekend at event doors and from noon to 4 P.M. on Friday, October 16th, at Cedar Lake Theatre, 547 West 26th Street. For details and exceptions, please see page 20 of the guide. Please note that purchases are subject to service charges.

Illustrations by Andy Friedman

Friday | October 16

Fiction Night | Paired Readings by *New Yorker* Writers

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Yiyun Li

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born in Nigeria. Her first novel, "Purple Hibiscus," came out in 2003 and won a Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book; her second, "Half of a Yellow Sun," appeared in 2006. In June, she published her first story collection, "The Thing Around Your Neck," parts of which originally ran in *The New Yorker.*

Yiyun Li grew up in Beijing and came to the United States in 1996. Her début story collection, "A Thousand Years of Good Prayers," won the inaugural Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, a Guardian first-book award, and a Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award. She published her first novel, "The Vagrants," in February. She has been contributing to *The New Yorker* since 2004.

7 P.M. (Le) Poisson Rouge
158 Bleecker Street ($25)
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)

David Bezmozgis and Jonathan Franzen

David Bezmozgis was born in Latvia in 1973 and emigrated to Canada in 1980. His début story collection, "Natasha and Other Stories," came out in 2004 and included his *New Yorker* story "Tapka." He is also the writer and director of a feature film, "Victoria Day," which premièred at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

Jonathan Franzen is the author of "The Discomfort Zone: A Personal History"; the essay collection "How to Be Alone"; and the novels "Strong Motion," "The Twenty-Seventh City," and "The Corrections." He has contributed fiction, essays, and reporting pieces to *The New Yorker* since 1994. His most recent story, "Good Neighbors," ran in the June 8th & 15th Summer Fiction Issue.

7 P.M. Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street ($25)

Mary Gaitskill

T. Coraghessan Boyle and Mary Gaitskill

T. Coraghessan Boyle has been contributing fiction to *The New Yorker* since 1993. He is the author of twelve novels, including "World's End," which won the PEN/Faulkner Award, and "The Women," which came out in February. He has published eight story collections, including "Tooth and Claw," whose title story appeared in *The New Yorker* and was included in "The Best American Short Stories 2004."

Mary Gaitskill is the author of two novels, "Two Girls, Fat and Thin" and "Veronica," which was a finalist for a National Book Award. She has also published three story collections: "Bad Behavior," "Because They Wanted To," and, most recently, "Don't Cry," whose title story first appeared in *The New Yorker.* She has been contributing fiction to the magazine since 1995.

7 P.M. Angel Orensanz Foundation
172 Norfolk Street ($25)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Daniyal Mueenuddin and Salman Rushdie

Daniyal Mueenuddin grew up in Lahore, Pakistan, and Elroy, Wisconsin, and practiced law in New York City before returning to Pakistan to write fiction. His first *New Yorker* story, "Nawabdin Electrician," was included in "The Best American Short Stories 2008." In February, he published his début story collection, "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders," whose title story first appeared in *The New Yorker.*

Salman Rushdie has written ten novels, most recently "The Enchantress of Florence." His other books include "The Moor's Last Sigh," "The Satanic Verses," and "Midnight's Children," which won the Booker Prize for Fiction and the Best of the Booker award, and a nonfiction collection, "Step Across This Line," and a children's book, "Haroun and the Sea of Stories." In 2007, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. He has been contributing to *The New Yorker* since 1987.

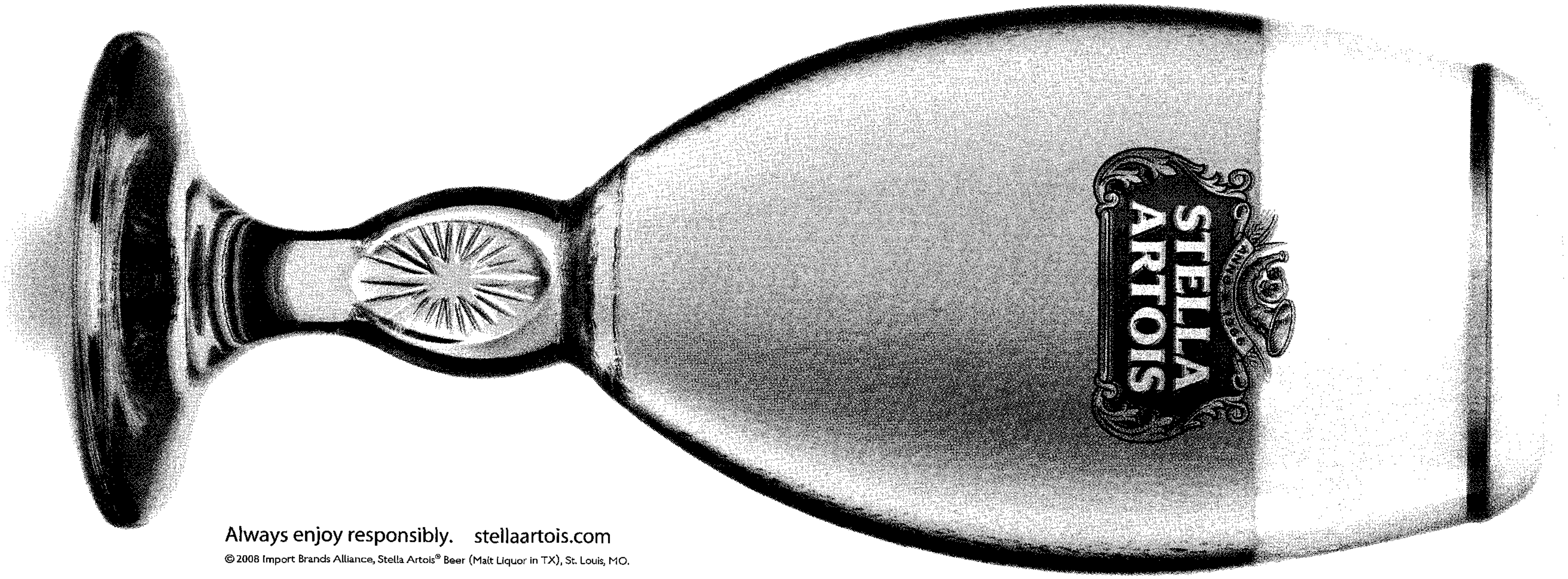
7 P.M. Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street ($25)

Edwidge Danticat and Junot Díaz

Edwidge Danticat was born in Haiti and emigrated to the United States when she was twelve. She has published a memoir, "Brother, I'm Dying," which won a 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award; the story collection "Krik? Krak!," a National Book Award finalist; and the novels "Breath, Eyes, Memory," "The Farming of Bones," and "The Dew Breaker," parts of which first appeared in *The New Yorker.*

Junot Díaz was born in the Dominican Republic and came to the United States at the age of six. He is the author of a story collection, "Drown," and a novel, "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao," which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction last year. Parts of both books first appeared in *The New Yorker.* He has contributed fiction to the magazine since 1995.

9:30 P.M. Angel Orensanz Foundation
172 Norfolk Street ($25)

**STELLA ARTOIS**

Perfection has its price.

Of course it tastes better than other beers. We've had over 600 years to get the recipe right. Our esteemed brewery has been producing beer in Leuven since 1366. Which means we've been around a bit longer than most. Mind you, over the years our beer has witnessed the odd change or two. For instance, our customers no longer drink it to ward off the Plague, as they used to in medieval times. However, one thing has stayed the same after all these years. Stella Artois is still painstakingly brewed in a time-honored tradition with the choicest ingredients. Which is why our customers have kept coming back for more, even after 600 years.

Always enjoy responsibly. stellaartois.com

© 2008 Import Brands Alliance, Stella Artois® Beer (Malt Liquor in TX), St. Louis, MO.

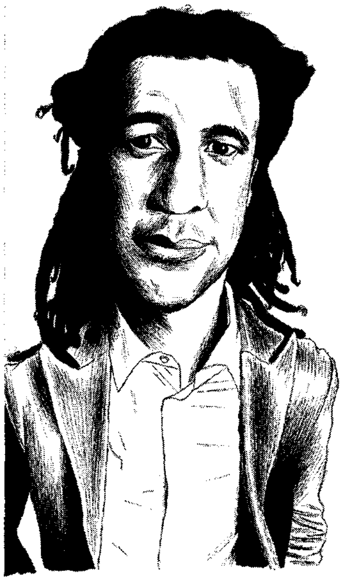
Friday | October 16

Joshua Ferris and Aleksandar Hemon

Joshua Ferris received the 2008 Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for his début novel, "Then We Came to the End." His stories have been anthologized in "Best New American Voices 2005" and in "New Stories from the South." "The Dinner Party," his first story for *The New Yorker*, appeared in the magazine last year and was nominated for a National Magazine Award. A second novel, "The Unnamed," will be published next year.

Aleksandar Hemon was born in Sarajevo and was stranded in the United States during the siege in 1992. He is the author of the novels "Nowhere Man" and "The Lazarus Project" and the story collection "The Question of Bruno." His new collection, "Love and Obstacles," came out in May and included his *New Yorker* story "The Noble Truths of Suffering," which won a National Magazine Award.

9:30 P.M. (Le) Poisson Rouge
158 Bleecker Street ($25)
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)

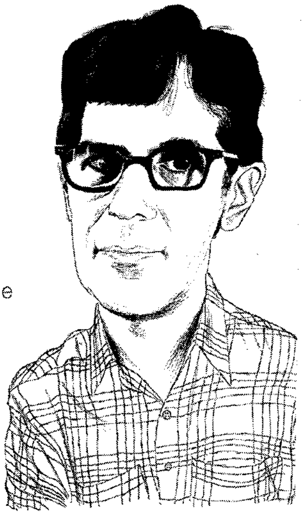


Colson Whitehead

Jonathan Lethem and Colson Whitehead

Jonathan Lethem has written eight novels, including "The Fortress of Solitude," "Motherless Brooklyn," which won the 1999 National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction and is being adapted for film, and "Chronic City," which comes out in October. He is also the author of several story collections, including "Men and Cartoons," and a collection of essays, "The Disappointment Artist." His most recent story for *The New Yorker*, "Ava's Apartment," appeared in the May 25th issue.

Colson Whitehead is the author of the novels "The Intuitionist," "John Henry Days," "Apex Hides the Hurt," and, most recently, "Sag Harbor," as well as "The Colossus of New York," a meditation on his native city. He is the recipient of a 2002 MacArthur Fellowship. His story "The Gangster" appeared in *The New Yorker's* 2008 Winter Fiction Issue.



Jonathan Lethem

9:30 P.M. Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street ($25)

George Saunders and Gary Shteyngart

George Saunders has published three story collections, including "In Persuasion Nation"; an illustrated novella, "The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil"; a children's book, "The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip"; and "The Braindead Megaphone," a collection of essays, many of which first appeared in *The New Yorker*. His story "Al Roosten" appeared in the February 2nd issue of the magazine.

Gary Shteyngart was born in Leningrad and emigrated to the United States as a child. His début novel, "The Russian Debutante's Handbook," won a Stephen Crane Award for First Fiction and a National Jewish Book Award for fiction. His second novel, "Absurdistan," parts of which originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, was published in 2006. A third novel will be published next year.

9:30 P.M. Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street ($25)

Brooklyn Playlist | A Special Concert Featuring Bands from the County of Kings

With **Dirty Projectors**, **House of Ladosha**, **Jubilee**, and **Liturgy**. Curated by the *New Yorker* staff writers **Sasha Frere-Jones** and **Kelefa Sanneh**.

Dirty Projectors is an experimental pop band formed by the singer-songwriter Dave Longstreth. It has made several records, including "The Getty Address," "New Attitude," "Rise Above," and "Bitte Orca," which was released in June. The group appears with David Byrne on the compilation album "Dark Was the Night" and has played alongside Björk and TV on the Radio.

House of Ladosha is a dark-crunk collective whose core members are Antonio Blair, Adam Radakovich, and Ojay Morgan. The group, which creates its music on GarageBand, has performed throughout the city, in venues including Glasslands Gallery, Public Assembly, Studio B, Cameo Gallery, the Annex, and Club Europa.

Jubilee was born Jess Gentile, in South Florida, and moved to New York to d.j. With DJ Ayres and Nick Catchdubs, she d.j.s the monthly party Flashing Lights. She has made mix tapes for Discobelle and the clothing line Mishka. Her EP, "Paypur," which she made with the producer Udachi, came out in August.

Liturgy is a transcendental-black-metal band led by Hunter Hunt-Hendrix. Its other members are Greg Fox, Tyler Dusenbury, and Bernard Gann. Its début full-length album, "Renihilation," was released in August and was preceded by a twelve-inch EP called "Immortal Life."

8 P.M. The Bell House
149 7th Street, Brooklyn ($25)

LOSE AND FIND YOURSELF IN ONE BITE

LU
PETIT ÉCOLIER
milk chocolate/chocolat au lait

RICH EUROPEAN CHOCOLATE

A CHIC LITTLE BISCUIT

Friday | October 16

Tales Out of School | *New Yorker* Writers on *The New Yorker*

The Moth and *The New Yorker* present an evening of stories about life at the magazine. With **Roger Angell**, **Adam Gopnik**, **Ariel Levy**, **Mark Singer**, and **Judith Thurman**. Hosted by **Andy Borowitz**.

Roger Angell has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1944. He became a fiction editor in 1956 and is now a senior editor and staff writer. His writings for the magazine include fiction, reporting pieces, Comment, movie and book reviews, verse, and more than a hundred Sporting Scene pieces, mostly about baseball. He is the author of ten books, including, most recently, the memoir "Let Me Finish."

Adam Gopnik has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 1986. He is the author of the essay collections "Paris to the Moon" and "Through the Children's Gate," both of which include many of his pieces from the magazine, and also a children's novel, "The King in the Window," and "Angels and Ages: A Short Book About Darwin, Lincoln, and Modern Life."

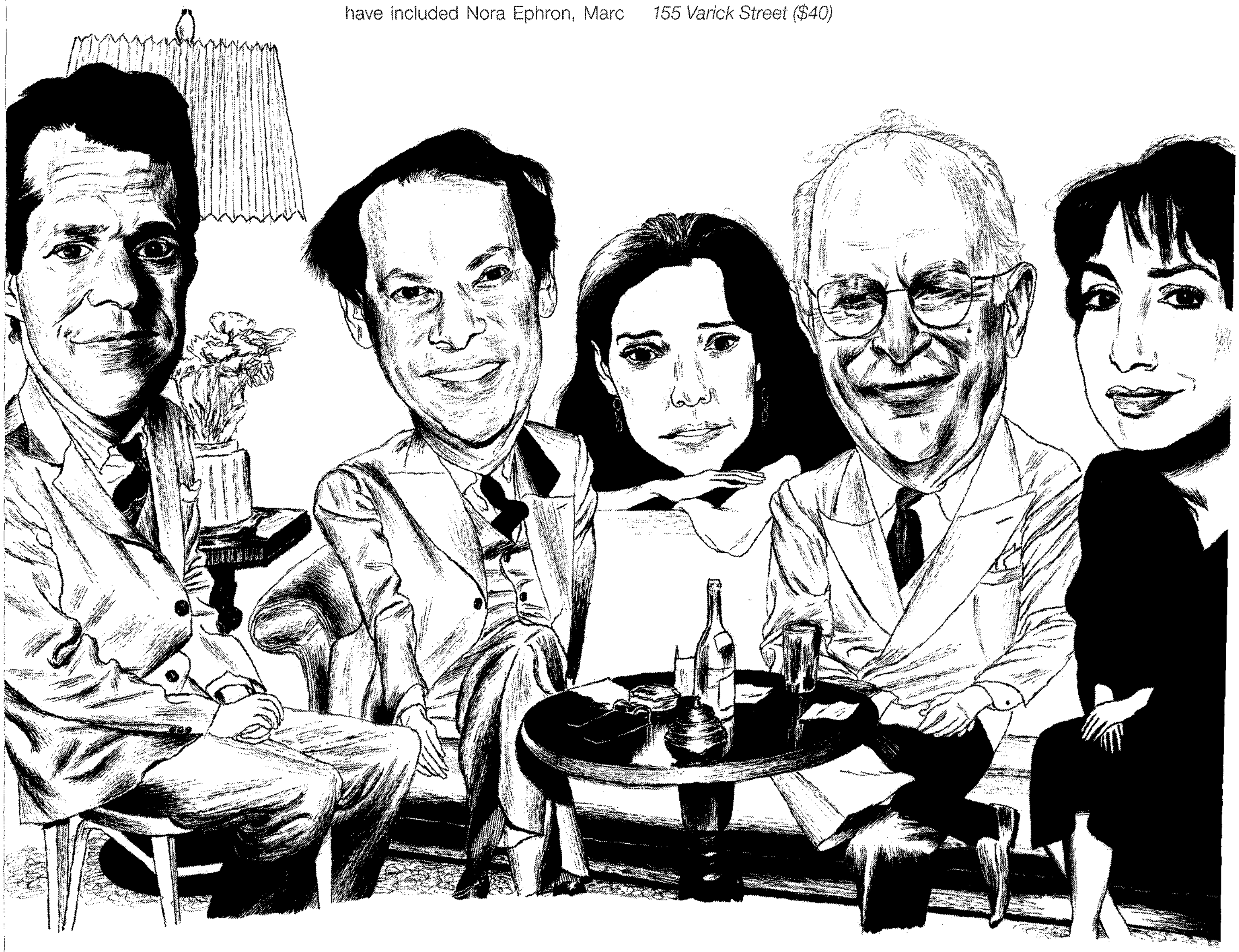
Ariel Levy joined *The New Yorker* as a staff writer in 2008. Her subjects for the magazine have included Nora Ephron, Marc Jacobs, and "The Joy of Sex." She is the author of "Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture."

Mark Singer has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1974. His books include "Funny Money"; "Mr. Personality," a collection of his *New Yorker* pieces; "Somewhere in America," a compilation of his U.S. Journal columns for the magazine; and, most recently, "Character Studies," a collection of his *New Yorker* Profiles.

Judith Thurman, a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, writes about fashion, books, and other subjects. She is the author of the biographies "Secrets of the Flesh: A Life of Colette" and "Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller." "Cleopatra's Nose: 39 Varieties of Desire," a collection of her *New Yorker* pieces, came out in 2007.

Andy Borowitz has been contributing to *The New Yorker* since 1998. His books include "Who Moved My Soap?: The CEO's Guide to Surviving in Prison," "The Republican Playbook," and "The Borowitz Report: The Big Book of Shockers," a collection of articles from his online column, the Borowitz Report, which received the first National Press Club Humor Writing Award.

8 P.M. City Winery
155 Varick Street ($40)



Mark Singer, Adam Gopnik, Ariel Levy, Roger Angell, and Judith Thurman

Advertisement

THE NEW YORKER Festival

October 16|17|18

Design Humor Architecture Fiction Food Movies Science Photography Music Business Art Theatre Politics Media

Receive Festival Updates by E-Mail

Get the latest news about added events, schedule changes, and last-minute offers delivered directly to your e-mail in-box by joining Festival Wire.

Sign up today at **newyorker.com/festival**.

Saturday | October 17

Writers and Their Subjects

Ricky Jay and Mark Singer

Now you see it, now you don't.

Ricky Jay is a sleight-of-hand artist, actor, and writer. His one-man shows include "Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants" and "Ricky Jay: On the Stem," both of which were directed by David Mamet. He has appeared in numerous films, and his firm, Deceptive Practices, has been a consultant on more than twenty movies. He is the author of, among other books, "Learned Pigs & Fireproof Women" and "Jay's Journal of Anomalies," both *Times* Notable Books.

Mark Singer, a *New Yorker* staff writer since 1974, is the author of several books, among them "Character Studies," which includes his *New Yorker* Profile of Ricky Jay.

1 P.M. City Winery
155 Varick Street ($27)

In Conversation With

Annie Proulx interviewed by Deborah Treisman

West is west.

Annie Proulx won a PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction for her first novel, "Postcards," and a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award for her second, "The Shipping News." Two of her *New Yorker* stories have received National Magazine Awards for fiction: "Brokeback Mountain," in 1998, which was the basis of the Oscar-winning film; and, this year, "Them Old Cowboy Songs," which appears in her most recent story collection, "Fine Just the Way It Is."

Deborah Treisman is the fiction editor of *The New Yorker.*

10 A.M. Florence Gould Hall
55 East 59th Street ($27)

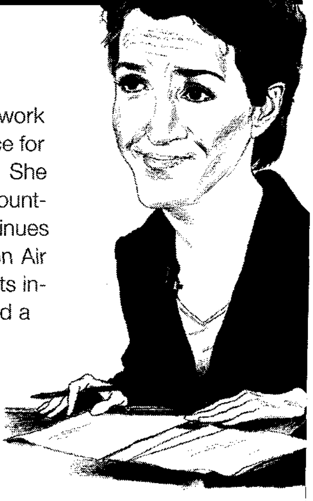
Rachel Maddow interviewed by Ariel Levy

The new newswoman.

Rachel Maddow is the host of MSNBC's "The Rachel Maddow Show." Last year, she was named a political analyst for the network and was a substitute moderator of "Race for the White House with David Gregory." She has been a regular guest anchor for "Countdown with Keith Olbermann" and continues to host "The Rachel Maddow Show" on Air America, where she has worked since its inception, in 2004. This year, she received a Gracie Award from American Women in Radio and Television.

Ariel Levy is a staff writer at *The New Yorker* and the author of "Female Chauvinist Pigs."

10 A.M. Stage37
508 West 37th Street ($27)



Rachel Maddow

Tyler Perry interviewed by Henry Finder

Bad all by himself.

Tyler Perry is the writer, director, and star of numerous films, including "Diary of a Mad Black Woman," "Madea Goes to Jail," "Madea's Family Reunion," and "I Can Do Bad All by Myself," many of which are based on his touring stage plays. He wrote and directed the TV series "Tyler Perry's House of Payne" and "Meet the Browns," and is the author of the *Times* best-seller "Don't Make a Black Woman Take Off Her Earrings."

Henry Finder is the editorial director of *The New Yorker.*

4 P.M. Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street ($27)

Tyler Perry

New Yorker Talks

Malcolm Gladwell | The Curious Case of Michael Vick

Malcolm Gladwell has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1996. In 2001, he won a National Magazine Award for "The Pitchman," his Profile of Ron Popeil. He is the author of the *Times* best-selling books "The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference," "Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking," and, most recently, "Outliers: The Story of Success."

1 P.M. Florence Gould Hall
55 East 59th Street ($27)

Advertisement

THE
NEW YORKER
Festival
Online

Your virtual front-row seat to sold-out events.

With The New Yorker Festival's online coverage, readers everywhere can experience Festival events.

newyorker.com/festival

Select events will be available for viewing online. For event announcements
and Web schedules, visit newyorker.com/festival and sign up for Festival Wire.

Saturday | October 17

Simon Schama | Obama and History

Simon Schama is the University Professor of History and Art History at Columbia University and has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1994. His television work for the BBC and PBS includes the Emmy Award-winning "Power of Art" and the fifteen-part "A History of Britain." Three of his art essays for *The New Yorker* won a National Magazine Award and are included in "Hang-Ups: Essays on Painting." His most recent book, "The American Future: A History," came out in May.

4 P.M. Florence Gould Hall
55 East 59th Street ($27)

Screen Gems | *New Yorker* Film Critics Present Overlooked Masterpieces

Alfred Hitchcock's "Shadow of a Doubt"

David Denby hosts a screening and discussion of the 1943 thriller, about a young girl who suspects her uncle of being a murderer.

David Denby is a film critic at *The New Yorker.* He is the author of "Great Books," about reading the literary canon, and "American Sucker," a memoir about his misadventures in investing; parts of both books first appeared in the magazine. His most recent book, "Snark," a cultural critique, was published this year.

10 A.M. Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street ($20)

Henri-Georges Clouzot's "Quai des Orfèvres"

Anthony Lane hosts a screening and discussion of the 1947 film, about a Parisian chanteuse and a crime of passion.

Anthony Lane joined *The New Yorker* as a film critic in 1993. In 2001, three of his pieces won the National Magazine Award for reviews and criticism. He is the author of "Nobody's Perfect: Writings from The New Yorker," a collection of his reviews, essays, and Profiles from the magazine.

1:30 P.M. Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street ($20)

Jean-Luc Godard's "King Lear"

Richard Brody hosts a screening and discussion of the 1987 film, starring Peter Sellers as a descendant of William Shakespeare who attempts to restore his plays in a post-apocalyptic world.

Richard Brody is the movies editor of Goings On About Town. His book "Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life of Jean-Luc Godard," parts of which first appeared in the magazine, came out last year. His Profile of Godard ran in *The New Yorker* in 2000.

5 P.M. Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street ($20)

Panels

New Math

Crunching the numbers.

With **Nancy Flournoy**, **Bill James**, **Nate Silver**, and **Sudhir Venkatesh**. Moderated by **Ben McGrath**.

Nancy Flournoy is the chair of the statistics department at the University of Missouri at Columbia. Her work is in biostatistics and adaptive design. She develops treatment-allocation procedures that use accruing data to produce better predictive estimates. She is the recipient of a Distinguished Service Award from the National Institute of Statistical Sciences and a fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science.

Bill James has written dozens of books on baseball, including "The Bill James Baseball Abstract," which he published annually from 1977 to 1988. Last year, he began publishing "The Bill James Gold Mine," an annual volume of essays and team-by-team analysis. He coined the term "sabermetrics," a technique that uses objective observation and data to analyze baseball, and is the senior baseball operations adviser for the Boston Red Sox.

Nate Silver is the creator of FiveThirtyEight.com, which accurately predicted the winner of the 2008 Presidential election in forty-nine states and was named a Notable Narrative by Harvard University's Nieman Foundation for Journalism. He is the inventor of PECOTA, a system for projecting the success of Major League Baseball players, and co-writes "Baseball Prospectus," an annual guide.

Sudhir Venkatesh, an urban ethnographer, is the William B. Ransford Professor of Sociology at Columbia University. His books include "American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto," "Off the Books: The

Underground Economy of the Urban Poor," which won the C. Wright Mills Award in 2007, and "Gang Leader for a Day." His documentary "Dislocation," about families relocating from condemned housing projects, aired on PBS in 2005.

Ben McGrath is a staff writer at *The New Yorker.* His subjects for the magazine have included robotic arms, doomsday prophets, and Mayor Michael Bloomberg. "The Professor of Baseball," his Sporting Scene piece on Bill James, was published in 2003.

10 A.M. Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street ($27)

Mad Men

Truth in advertising.

With **Lee Clow**, **Steve Stoute**, and **Matthew Weiner**.
Moderated by **Ken Auletta**.

Lee Clow is the global director of media arts and chief creative officer of TBWA Worldwide and a founding member of Chiat/Day. His contributions to modern advertising include Apple's "1984" commercial and "Think different" campaign, the Energizer Bunny, and Nissan's "Enjoy the Ride." His recent work includes Pedigree's "Dogs Rule," Gatorade's "What's G?," and Pepsi's "Refresh Everything." He is a member of the One Club Hall of Fame and the MOMA Advertising Hall of Fame and a Clio Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.

Steve Stoute is the founder and C.E.O. of Translation LLC, an advertising and brand-imaging company that uses entertainment alliances and youth-market insight to drive consumer interest toward clients' brands. He has worked with global corporations such as Samsung, McDonald's, General Motors, and Hewlett-Packard, and with artists such as Gwen Stefani, Justin Timberlake, and Beyoncé.

Matthew Weiner is the creator and executive producer of the television series "Mad Men," about the advertising world in the nineteen-sixties, which has won six Emmys, three Golden Globe Awards, and two Writers Guild Awards. Previously, he was an executive producer and writer for "The Sopranos," for which he won two Emmys and a Writers Guild Award. His other producing credits include "Becker" and "Andy Richter Controls the Universe." He wrote and directed the film "What Do You Do All Day?"

Ken Auletta has contributed to *The New Yorker* since 1977 and writes the Annals of Communications. He is the author of eleven books, including four *Times* best-sellers. His book "Media Man: Ted Turner's Improbable Empire" grew out of his National Magazine Award-winning *New Yorker* Profile. His new book, "Googled: The End of the World as We Know It," comes out in November.

10 A.M. City Winery
155 Varick Street ($27)

The Music Biz

Remixing the industry.

With **Jace Clayton**, **Josh Deutsch**, **Melvin Gibbs**, **Danny Goldberg**, and **Livia Tortella**.
Moderated by **Sasha Frere-Jones**.

Jace Clayton, a.k.a. DJ /rupture, has performed as a d.j. in more than thirty countries. In 2001, he released the mix tape "Gold Teeth Thief." It was followed by "Minesweeper Suite" and "Uproot" and by the albums "Special Gunpowder" and "Patches." He is a member of the group Nettle, the host of a radio show on WFMU, the founder of Soot Records, and the co-founder of the label Dutty Artz.

Josh Deutsch is the founder and C.E.O. of Downtown Music, one of the largest independent-music and music-publishing companies in the United States. Downtown has produced such artists as Mos Def, Gnarls Barkley, Carla Bruni, Justice, and Santigold. Previously, he was the the senior vice-president of A. & R. at Virgin Records and the executive vice-president of Elektra Records. He has worked with and developed many artists, including Lenny Kravitz, Jet, Jason Mraz, and Third Eye Blind.

Melvin Gibbs is a Grammy-nominated bass guitarist and songwriter who has appeared on nearly two hundred albums. He was a founding member of Black Rock Coalition, the Punk-Funk

Joan Cusack, Richard Kind, Luis Guzmán, John Turturro, and Christine Baranski

All-Stars, and Harriet Tubman, and was a member of Rollins Band. He has collaborated with artists such as Femi Kuti, Arto Lindsay, dead prez, and Eddie Palmieri. "Ancients Speak," his début album with Melvin Gibbs's Elevated Entity, was released in March.

Danny Goldberg is the president of Gold Village Entertainment, whose clients include the Hives, Rhett Miller, Dolores O'Riordon, Stars, Allison Moorer, Rickie Lee Jones, Steve Earle, Care Bears on Fire, and Tom Morello. He began his career as a music journalist and is the former president of Atlantic Records and the former chairman and C.E.O. of Mercury Records. His memoir, "Bumping Into Geniuses: My Life Inside the Rock and Roll Business," came out last year.

Livia Tortella is the general manager and executive vice-president of marketing and creative media at Atlantic Records. Previously, she worked at PolyGram Canada and at Island Def Jam Music Group. At Atlantic, she has developed such artists as Death Cab for Cutie, Kid Rock, Rob Thomas, Shinedown, and Jason Mraz. She was the executive producer of the multi-platinum soundtrack for "Twilight," which was released on Chop Shop/Atlantic.

Sasha Frere-Jones is *The New Yorker's* pop-music critic. His work has been selected four times for the "Da Capo Best Music Writing" series. He is a member of the band Ui, with whom he has recorded five albums and toured America and Europe.

1 P.M. Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street ($27)

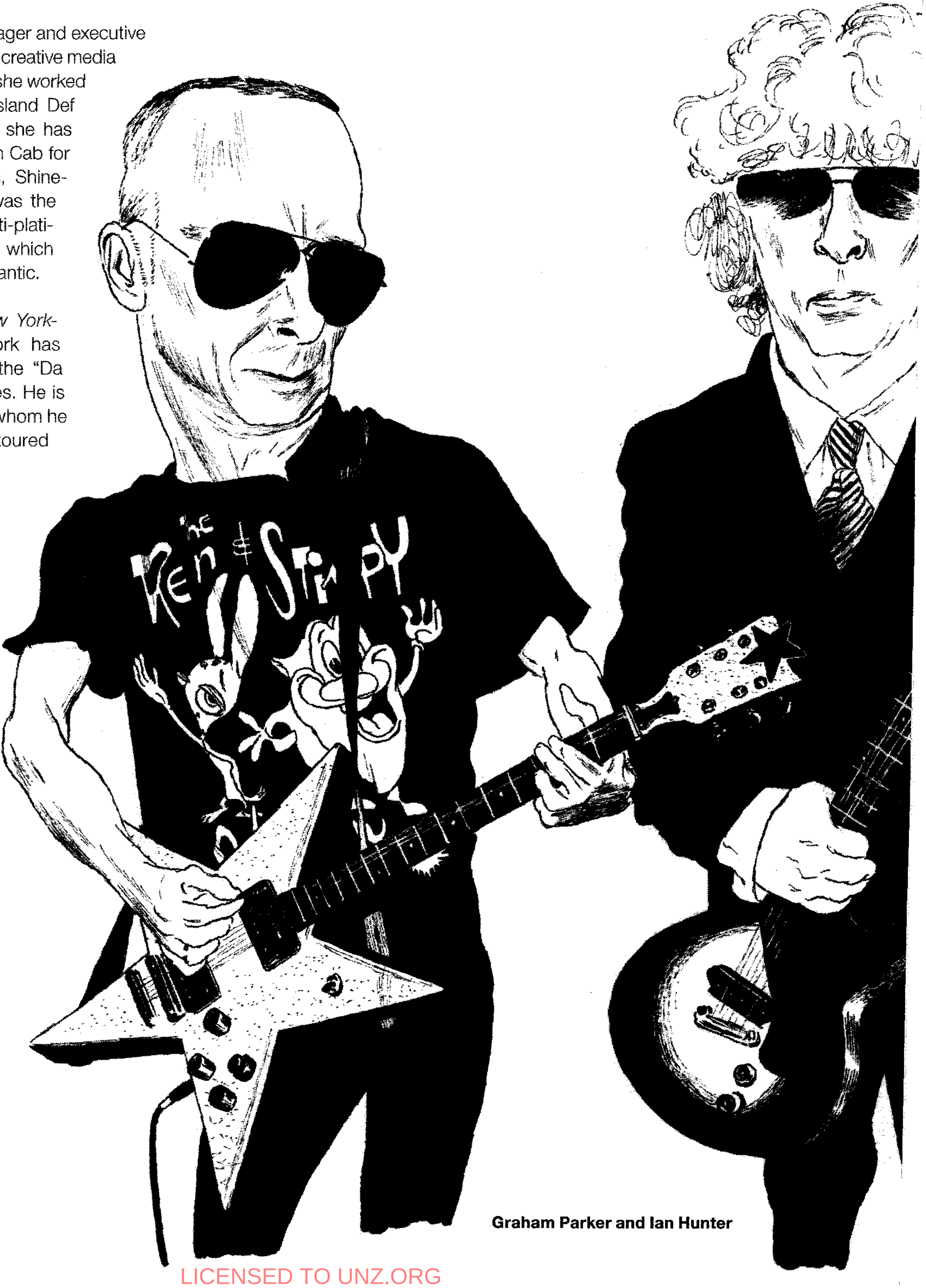
The Political Scene
Obama: Year One.

With **Hendrik Hertzberg**, **Ryan Lizza**, and **Jane Mayer**. Moderated by **Dorothy Wickenden**.

Hendrik Hertzberg joined *The New Yorker* forty years ago as a Talk of the Town reporter, before moving to Washington, where he served as President Jimmy Carter's chief speechwriter and then as the editor of *The New Republic*. He returned to *The New Yorker* in 1992 as a senior editor and staff writer. He is the author of "One Million," "Politics: Observations & Arguments," and "¡Obamanos!: The Rise of a New Political Era," which will be out at the end of October.

Ryan Lizza joined *The New Yorker* as its Washington correspondent in 2007. Previously, he was a senior editor at *The New Republic*. "Making It," his *New Yorker* piece about Barack Obama's career in Chicago, was nominated for a National Magazine Award. He is working on a book about the first year of Obama's Presidency.

Jane Mayer has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1995. She is the author of "The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals," and the co-author of "Strange Justice" and "Landslide." She is the recipient of the John



Graham Parker and Ian Hunter

Chancellor Award for Excellence in Journalism, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the 2009 J. Anthony Lukas Prize from Columbia University.

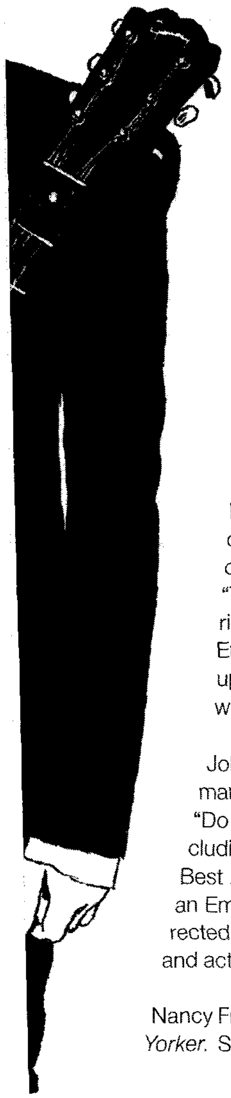
Dorothy Wickenden is the executive editor of *The New Yorker.*

4 P.M. City Winery
155 Varick Street ($27)

Character Actors
Second bananas.

With **Christine Baranski**, **Joan Cusack**, **Luis Guzmán**, **Richard Kind**, and **John Turturro**. Moderated by **Nancy Franklin**.

Christine Baranski made her Broadway début in 1980, in "Hide & Seek," and has won two Tony Awards, for "The Real Thing" and "Rumors." More recently, she appeared in "Boeing-Boeing." From 1995 to 1998, she starred in the TV series "Cybill," for which she won an Emmy Award and a Screen Actors Guild Award. Her film credits include "Chicago," "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," "The Birdcage," and "Mamma Mia!"



Joan Cusack has acted in dozens of films, including "Addams Family Values," "School of Rock," "Arlington Road," "Confessions of a Shopaholic," "My Sister's Keeper," and, with her brother John, "War, Inc." She has twice been nominated for an Oscar, for "Working Girl" and for "In & Out," and will appear next year in "Mars Needs Moms!" She was a cast member of "Saturday Night Live" and starred in the sitcom "What About Joan?"

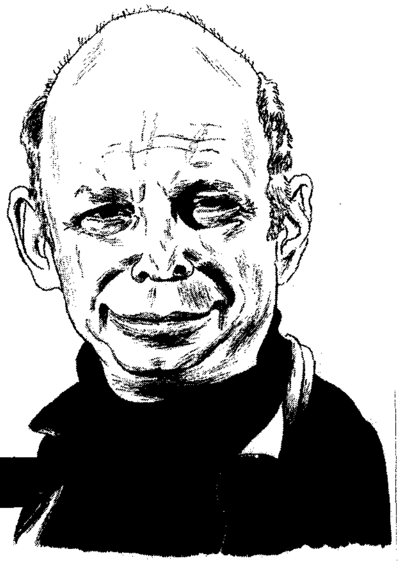
Luis Guzmán has more than eighty film credits, among them "Carlito's Way," "Anger Management," "Waiting…," and "The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3." He has also appeared in Steven Soderbergh's films "Out of Sight," "The Limey," and "Traffic," and in Paul Thomas Anderson's "Boogie Nights," "Magnolia," and "Punch-Drunk Love." His television credits include the series "Oz" and "John from Cincinnati."

Richard Kind is best known for his roles in the sitcoms "Mad About You" and "Spin City." He starred on Broadway in "The Tale of the Allergist's Wife," "The Producers," and "Sly Fox" and has had recurring roles on the TV series "Scrubs," "Curb Your Enthusiasm," and "Kim Possible." He appears in the upcoming Coen brothers film "A Serious Man," which will be released in October.

John Turturro has appeared in more than seventy films, many of them collaborations with Spike Lee, including "Do the Right Thing," and with the Coen brothers, including "Barton Fink," for which he won the Award for Best Actor at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2004, he won an Emmy Award for his role on "Monk." He wrote and directed "Romance & Cigarettes" and directed, co-wrote, and acted in "Mac" and "Illuminata."

Nancy Franklin writes the On Television column for *The New Yorker.* She joined the magazine in 1978, as a typist, and has contributed essays, Profiles, and Talk of the Town and humor pieces. From 1994 to 2002, she was one of the magazine's theatre critics.

4 P.M. Stage37
508 West 37th Street ($27)



Wallace Shawn

Early Shift

Loudon Wainwright III talks with Susan Morrison
A Conversation with Music
Folk father.

Loudon Wainwright III has been a folk musician since the late nineteen-sixties. He has recorded more than twenty albums, including the Grammy-nominated "I'm Alright" and "More Love Songs." "High Wide & Handsome," his album celebrating the music of Charlie Poole, was released in August. He is the son of the late *Life* editor and writer Loudon Wainwright, Jr., and the patriarch of a musical family that includes Rufus Wainwright, Martha Wainwright, and Lucy Wainwright Roche.

Susan Morrison is the articles editor of *The New Yorker* and the editor of The Talk of the Town and of Shouts & Murmurs. She edited the anthology "Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary: Reflections by Women Writers," which was published last year.

7:30 P.M. The Bell House
149 7th Street, Brooklyn ($35)

Wallace Shawn talks with John Lahr
Stage left.

Wallace Shawn is the author of "Marie and Bruce," "The Fever," and "The Designated Mourner," among other plays. This spring, he starred in his first new play in a decade, "Grasses of a Thousand Colors," at London's Royal Court Theatre. As an actor, his many credits include the films "Manhattan" and "Vanya on 42nd Street" and the TV series "Gossip Girl." His new book, "Essays," is out in September.

John Lahr is *The New Yorker's* senior drama critic and a two-time winner of the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism. He is the author of nineteen books, including "Light Fantastic," "Show and Tell," and "Honky Tonk Parade." He was played by Wallace Shawn in a film adaptation of "Prick Up Your Ears," his biography of Joe Orton.

7:30 P.M. City Winery
155 Varick Street ($35)

Ian Hunter and Graham Parker talk with Ben Greenman | A Conversation with Music
Pub-rock reunion.

Ian Hunter was the lead vocalist and songwriter for Mott the Hoople. Between 1969 and 1974, the band released eight albums and seven hit singles, including "All the Young Dudes," written by David Bowie. The first of his many solo albums appeared in 1975; his most recent,

Advertisement

THE
NEW YORKER
Festival
October
16|17|18

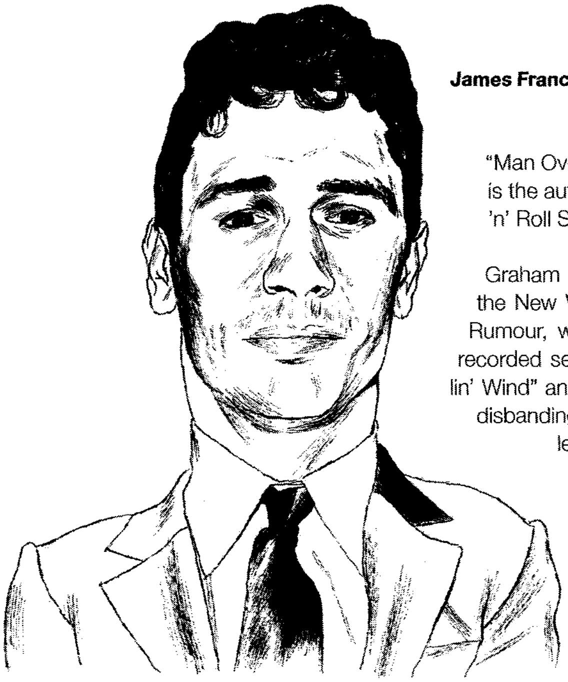
A portion of the ticket proceeds from this year's New Yorker Festival will be donated to Harlem Children's Zone.

"An all-encompassing, all-hands-on-deck anti-poverty effort that is literally saving a generation of children."
— Barack Obama

Under the visionary leadership of its president and C.E.O., Geoffrey Canada, Harlem Children's Zone offers innovative, efficiently run programs supporting children at every stage of their development and aimed at breaking the cycle of generational poverty for the thousands of children and families it serves.

To learn more, please visit **hcz.org**.

Harlem Children's
ZONE



James Franco

"Man Overboard," was released in July. He is the author of a memoir, "Diary of a Rock 'n' Roll Star."

Graham Parker was the lead singer of the New Wave band Graham Parker & the Rumour, which formed in 1975. The group recorded several hit albums, including "Howlin' Wind" and "Squeezing Out Sparks," before disbanding, in 1980. Since then, he has released many solo albums, including "The Mona Lisa's Sister" and "Don't Tell Columbus," and has also published a collection of short stories and the novel "The Other Life of Brian."

Ben Greenman is the Goings On About Town editor of *The New Yorker*. He is the author of the story collections "Correspondences," "A Circle Is a Balloon and Compass Both," and "Superbad," and the novels "Superworse" and "Please Step Back," which came out in April.

7:30 P.M. (Le) Poisson Rouge
158 Bleecker Street ($35)
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)

Neko Case talks with Sasha Frere-Jones | A Conversation with Music
Country noir.

Neko Case was born in Virginia and grew up in the Pacific Northwest. She started playing in punk bands as a teen-ager. Her first solo album, "The Virginian," was released in 1997. Her most recent, "Middle Cyclone," came out in March. She has also performed with the groups Cub, Maow, and the Corn Sisters, and is a member of the Canadian indie-rock group the New Pornographers, with whom she has recorded four albums.

Sasha Frere-Jones is *The New Yorker*'s pop-music critic. His piece on Neko Case appeared in the March 16th issue.

7:30 P.M. Stage37
508 West 37th Street ($25)

Saturday Night Sneak Preview

"Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire"

The New Yorker presents a special screening of "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire," about the struggles of a pregnant teen-ager in Harlem. After the screening, **Kelefa Sanneh** will talk with **Sapphire** and the film's director, **Lee Daniels**. Lionsgate will release "Precious" in theatres on November 6th.

Lee Daniels is the producer of "The Woodsman," "Tennessee," and the Oscar-winning "Monster's Ball." He made his directorial début with "Shadowboxer." The film "Precious," which he also produced, premièred at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival and won a Grand Jury Prize, the Audience Award in the U.S. Dramatic category, and a Special Jury Prize for Acting, for the supporting actress Mo'Nique.

Sapphire is the author of two books of poetry and prose, "American Dreams" and "Black Wings & Blind Angels." Her novel, "Push," part of which first appeared in *The New Yorker*, won the Black Caucus of the American Library Association's First Novelist Award, the Stephen Crane First Fiction Award, and the Mind Book of the Year award.

Kelefa Sanneh joined *The New Yorker* as a staff writer in 2008. His subjects for the magazine have included Tavis Smiley, Will Oldham, the comedian Katt Williams, and the radio host Michael Savage.

8 P.M. Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street ($27)

Late Shift

James Franco talks with Lauren Collins
Starry dynamo.

James Franco was in the cast of the TV series "Freaks and Geeks" and went on to star in such films as "City by the Sea," the "Spider-Man" trilogy, "Pineapple Express," and "Milk," for which he won an Independent Spirit Award. In 2002, he won a Golden Globe Award for the TV movie "James Dean." He will appear in the upcoming films "Your Highness" and "Eat, Pray, Love" and will star as Allen Ginsberg in "Howl."

Lauren Collins is a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. Her subjects for the magazine have included Michelle Obama, Donatella Versace, and the romance novelist Nora Roberts. Her piece on the graffiti artist Banksy won a 2007 Front Page Award from the Newswomen's Club of New York.

10 P.M. Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street ($35)

Tilda Swinton talks with Hilton Als
Odd woman out.

Tilda Swinton was born in London and lives in the Scottish Highlands. Her work includes "The Deep End," "Orlando," "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," "Burn After Reading," "Michael Clayton," for which she received a BAFTA Film Award and an Academy Award, and a number of Derek Jarman films. She recently appeared in Erick Zonca's "Julia" and will star in an adaptation of the Lionel Shriver novel "We Need to Talk About Kevin," directed by Lynne Ramsay.

Hilton Als is a staff writer and theatre critic at *The New Yorker* and the recipient of a George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He is the author of "The Women," a collection of essays. He is the Joan Leiman Jacobson Non-Fiction Writer at Smith College. "Tilda Moments," his piece on Tilda Swinton, appeared in the magazine in 2002.

10 P.M. City Winery
155 Varick Street ($35)

Steve Earle talks with John Seabrook | A Conversation with Music
Hardcore troubadour.

Steve Earle was born in Fort Monroe, Virginia. His first album, "Guitar Town," was released in 1986. "Townes," an album of songs by Townes Van Zandt, appeared in May. He has received two Grammy Awards for contemporary folk, for "The Revolution Starts . . . Now" and for "Washington Square Serenade." He is the author of a story collection, "Doghouse Roses," and a play, "Karla," and appeared in the HBO series "The Wire."

John Seabrook has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 1989. He is the author of "Nobrow: The Culture of Marketing—The Marketing of Culture" and "Deeper: My Two-Year Odyssey in Cyberspace." His *New Yorker* piece "The Flash of Genius," about the invention of the intermittent windshield wiper, was the basis of a feature film and appears in his most recent book, "Flash of Genius: And Other True Stories of Invention."

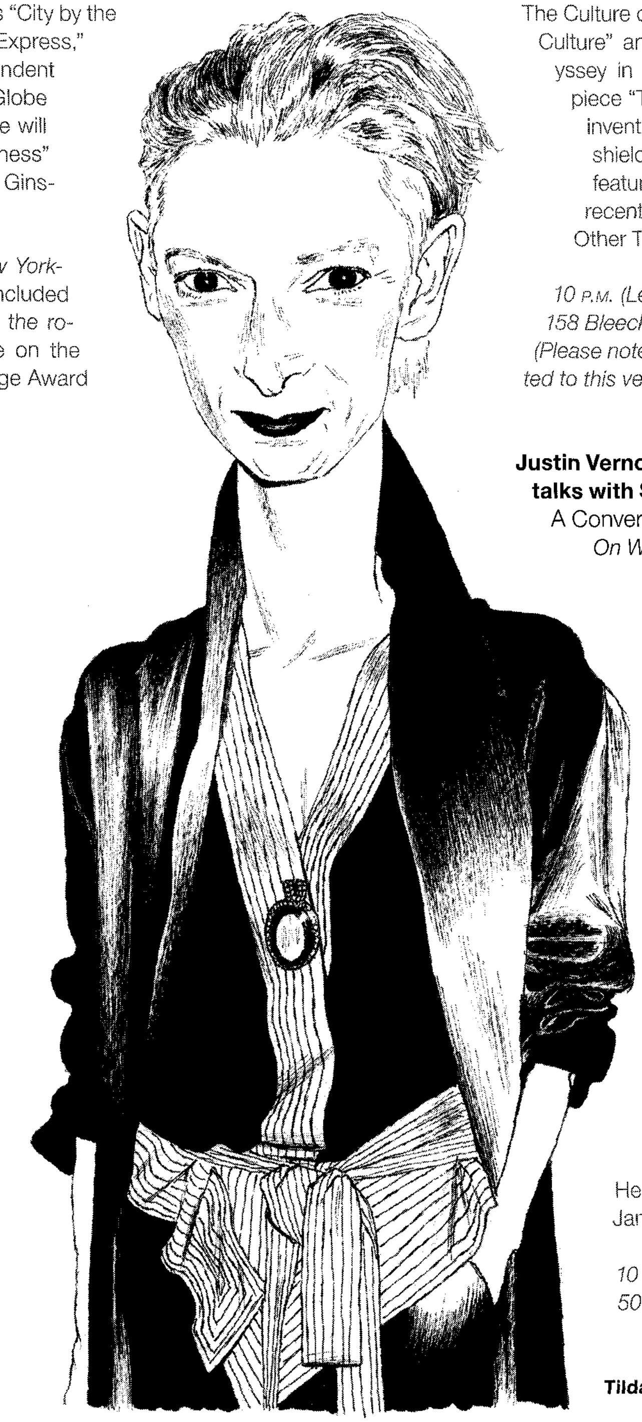
10 P.M. (Le) Poisson Rouge
158 Bleecker Street ($35)
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)

Justin Vernon of Bon Iver talks with Sasha Frere-Jones
A Conversation with Music
On Wisconsin.

Justin Vernon is a singer-songwriter from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, who performs with the band Bon Iver. In 2007, he recorded the album "For Emma, Forever Ago" by himself at his father's hunting cabin. It was released on the independent record label Jagjaguwar the following year and has since sold two hundred thousand copies in the United States. The band's most recent EP, "Blood Bank," was released in January, also on Jagjaguwar.

Sasha Frere-Jones is *The New Yorker's* pop-music critic. He wrote about Bon Iver in the January 12th issue.

10 P.M. Stage37
508 West 37th Street ($25)



Tilda Swinton

Sunday | October 18

About Town

Tailing Tilley

Test your *New Yorker* knowledge in this live, interactive game drawing on eighty-four years of the magazine's history. Teams of participants will decipher *New Yorker*-inspired clues, which will lead them to iconic locations around the city. Eustace Tilley himself will be hopping from one location to another, and the team with the most frequent sightings will get a prize. The game will last approximately four hours, and participants can join as individuals or as teams of up to ten.

11 A.M. Galway Hooker
7 East 36th Street ($15)

Morning at the Frick

For the second year, **Peter Schjeldahl** will lead a tour of the museum before public hours begin, followed by coffee and conversation.

Peter Schjeldahl is *The New Yorker's* art critic. He has published several books of criticism, including "The Hydrogen Jukebox: Selected Writings" and "Let's See: Writings on Art from The New Yorker," which came out last year. He has received the Frank Jewett Mather Award from the College Art Association and a Guggenheim Fellowship, and won last year's Clark Prize for Excellence in Arts Writing.

11 A.M. Frick Collection
1 East 70th Street ($60)

Come Hungry

Continuing a Festival tradition, **Calvin Trillin** will lead a tasting walk from Greenwich Village to Chinatown, concluding with a dim-sum feast.

Calvin Trillin has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* for more than four decades. His gastronomic reporting pieces have included, in recent years, articles on Ecuadoran soup, Singaporean street food, and the best barbecue in Texas. He has published twenty-six books, among them comic novels, nonfiction, and memoir. Three of his books on eating are collected in "The Tummy Trilogy."

11 A.M.
Ticket buyers will be contacted concerning the starting point. ($100)

Strings Attached

Basil Twist will lead a tour of his studio and talk about the puppeteer's art with **Joan Acocella**. Drinks will be served.

Basil Twist is a third-generation puppeteer whose stage works include the Obie Award-winning "Symphonie Fantastique"; "La Bella Dormente Nel Bosco," which was performed at the Lincoln Center Festival in 2005; "Dogugaeshi," which was commissioned by the Japan Society; "Hansel and Gretel," which was commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera and the Atlanta Opera; and "Arias with a Twist," his collaboration with the drag artist Joey Arias. Twist will make his Broadway début next year, creating the puppetry for "The Addams Family."

Joan Acocella has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1992 and the magazine's dance critic since 1998. She has written books on Mark Morris and Willa Cather and is the editor of "The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky." Many of her *New Yorker* essays are collected in "Twenty-eight Artists and Two Saints." She wrote about puppetry in the March 23rd issue of the magazine.

12 noon.
Ticket buyers will be contacted concerning the location. This venue is not wheelchair-accessible. ($60)

Inside the Artist's Studio

Chuck Close will show his work and talk with **Adam Gopnik** at his studio. Drinks will be served.

Chuck Close is a painter and photographer whose work is included in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Tate Gallery. In 1998, a retrospective of his drawings, photographs, and monumental portraits was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art. In 2004, the Metropolitan Museum of Art mounted a retrospective of his prints. This spring, the PaceWildenstein gallery featured his recent paintings and tapestries.

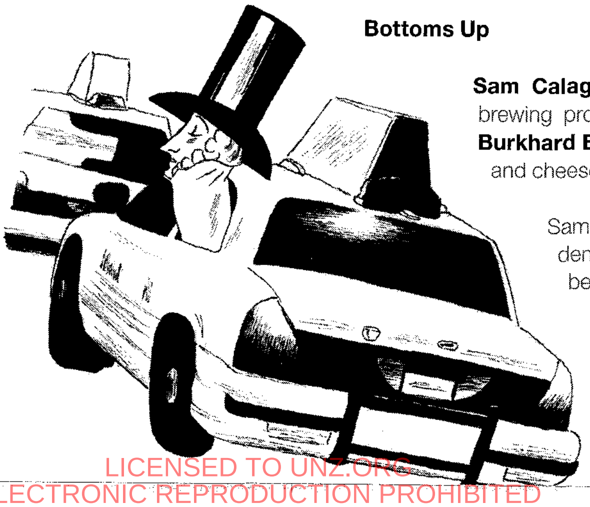
Adam Gopnik has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 1986. He is the author of the essay collections "Paris to the Moon" and "Through the Children's Gate," both of which include many of his pieces from the magazine. His most recent book is "Angels and Ages: A Short Book About Darwin, Lincoln, and Modern Life."

12 noon.
Ticket buyers will be contacted concerning the location. ($60)

Bottoms Up

Sam Calagione will demonstrate the beer-brewing process and discuss his work with **Burkhard Bilger**. Tastings, paired with meats and cheeses, will be served.

Sam Calagione is the founder and president of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, a beer manufacturer based in Delaware. Dogfish Head focusses on brewing stronger, more exotic beers,



Eustace Tilley

Dogfish Head
Craft Brewed Ales

Sam Calagione

using non-traditional ingredients such as licorice root, green raisins, and chicory, and is known for its high hops content. He is the author of "Brewing Up a Business" and "Extreme Brewing" and the co-author of "He Said Beer, She Said Wine."

Burkhard Bilger has been a staff writer for *The New Yorker* since 2001. His subjects have ranged from cheese-making nuns and Cambodian mushroom hunters to sapphire miners in Madagascar. "A Better Brew," his piece about Sam Calagione and the extreme-beer movement, appeared in the 2008 Food Issue. He is the author of the book "Noodling for Flatheads."

12 noon. The Gate
321 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn ($50)
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)

New Yorker Talks

James Surowiecki | Tomorrow Never Comes:
Why We Procrastinate and How It Matters

James Surowiecki has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 2000 and writes the magazine's Financial Page. His book, "The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies, and Nations," was published in 2004.

11 A.M. City Winery
155 Varick Street ($27)

Atul Gawande | The Death of the Master Builder:
A Story of Risk, Medicine, and Skyscrapers

Atul Gawande is a practicing surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital, in Boston, and an associate professor at the Harvard School of Public Health and at Harvard Medical School. Previously, he served as a senior health-policy adviser in the Clinton Administration. He is the author of "Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science" and "Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance." "The Cost Conundrum," his piece on health-care spending, appeared in the June 1st issue of *The New Yorker.*

1 P.M. Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street ($27)

Kaffeeklatsch | *New Yorker* Writers and Artists Up Close

Heroes and Antiheroes
Beyond good and evil.

With **Donald Antrim, A. M. Homes**, **George Saunders**, and **Gary Shteyngart**. Moderated by **Cressida Leyshon**.

Donald Antrim is the author of the novels "Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World," "The Hundred Brothers," and "The Verificationist," and also "The Afterlife," a memoir, parts of which first appeared in *The New Yorker.* He received a Guggenheim Fellowship for Fiction and was a recent fellow at the American Academy in Berlin.

A. M. Homes is the author of five novels, including "This Book Will Save Your Life" and "The End of Alice"; the story collections "The Safety of Objects" and "Things You Should Know"; and a memoir, "The Mistress's Daughter," parts of which first appeared in *The New Yorker.*

George Saunders has published, among other books, "CivilWarLand in Bad Decline," "Pastoralia," and "In Persuasion Nation."

Gary Shteyngart is the author of the novels "The Russian Debutante's Handbook" and "Absurdistan." A third novel will be out next year.

Cressida Leyshon is the deputy fiction editor of *The New Yorker.*

10 A.M. Condé Nast Executive Dining Room
4 Times Square, entrance on 43rd Street ($15)

George Booth interviewed by David Owen
Laughing last.

George Booth sold his first cartoon to *The New Yorker* in 1969 and has been a frequent contributor to the magazine ever since. In 1993, he received the Gag Cartoon Award from the National Cartoonists Society. His cartoons have been collected in several volumes, including "Omnibooth" and "The Essential George Booth." His latest collection, "About Dogs," came out in April.

David Owen is the author of, among other books, "Sheetrock & Shellac," "My Usual Game," "The Chosen One," and, most recently, "Green Metropolis," which is out in September. Parts of all four books first appeared in *The New Yorker.* "Booth Country," his Profile of George Booth, appeared in the magazine in 1998.

12 noon. Condé Nast Executive Dining Room
4 Times Square, entrance on 43rd Street ($15)

Our Far-Flung Correspondents
Notes from all over.

With **David Grann**, **Elizabeth Kolbert**, and **Ian Parker**. Moderated by **Daniel Zalewski**.

David Grann, a *New Yorker* staff writer, has written about everything from a French serial imposter to the search for a giant squid. "The Lost City of Z," his *New Yorker* article about his journey into the Amazon to uncover the fate of a missing explorer, was expanded into a *Times* best-selling book that is being adapted for film. A collection of his *New Yorker* pieces, "The Devil and Sherlock Holmes," will be published next year.

Elizabeth Kolbert received an American Association for the Advancement of Science Journalism Award and a National Magazine Award for her *New Yorker* series on global warming, which formed the basis of her book "Field Notes from a Catastrophe." In the May 25th issue, she wrote about mass extinction, for which she reported from Panama, the Adirondacks, and a bat hibernaculum in Vermont.

Ian Parker has been contributing to *The New Yorker* since 1994. He has written about the collapse of Iceland's economy, the Mauritius Dodo Expedition, and bonobos, a species of African ape, as well as about Christopher Hitchens, George Clooney, and Alec Baldwin. "The

Gift," his Profile of the philanthropist Zell Kravinsky, received a National Magazine Award.

Daniel Zalewski is the features editor of *The New Yorker* and has contributed Profiles of Rem Koolhaas, Werner Herzog, and Ian McEwan.

2 P.M. Condé Nast Executive Dining Room
4 Times Square, entrance on 43rd Street ($15)

Master Classes

Cartooning
With **Robert Mankoff**.

Robert Mankoff has been the cartoon editor of *The New Yorker* since 1997 and a contributing cartoonist since 1977. He is the author of "The Naked Cartoonist: A New Way to Enhance Your Creativity" and the editor of many anthologies of *New Yorker* cartoons, including, most recently, "On the Money: The Economy in Cartoons, 1925-2009."

10 A.M. Condé Nast Auditorium
4 Times Square, entrance on 43rd Street ($35)

Photography
With **Platon**.

Platon became a staff photographer for *The New Yorker* in 2008. "Service," his portfolio of U.S. military personnel and their families, ran in the magazine last fall and received a National Magazine Award. His work is collected in the monograph "Platon's Republic" and has been exhibited at New York's Milk Gallery, London's Ex-Saatchi gallery, and elsewhere around the world.

12 noon. Condé Nast Auditorium
4 Times Square, entrance on 43rd Street ($35)

Copy Editing
With **Ann Goldstein**, **Mary Norris**, and **Elizabeth Pearson-Griffiths**.

Ann Goldstein joined *The New Yorker* in 1974 and is the head of the copy department. She also edits pieces by Roger Angell, Ian Frazier, and Janet Malcolm, among others. Last year, she received a Guggenheim Fellowship for the forthcoming complete works of Primo Levi, for which she is the editor and also a translator. Her translations of Levi and others have appeared in the magazine.

Mary Norris has more than twenty years' experience as a *New Yorker* copy editor and has contributed to The Talk of the Town.

Elizabeth Pearson-Griffiths has been a copy editor at *The New Yorker* since 1986.

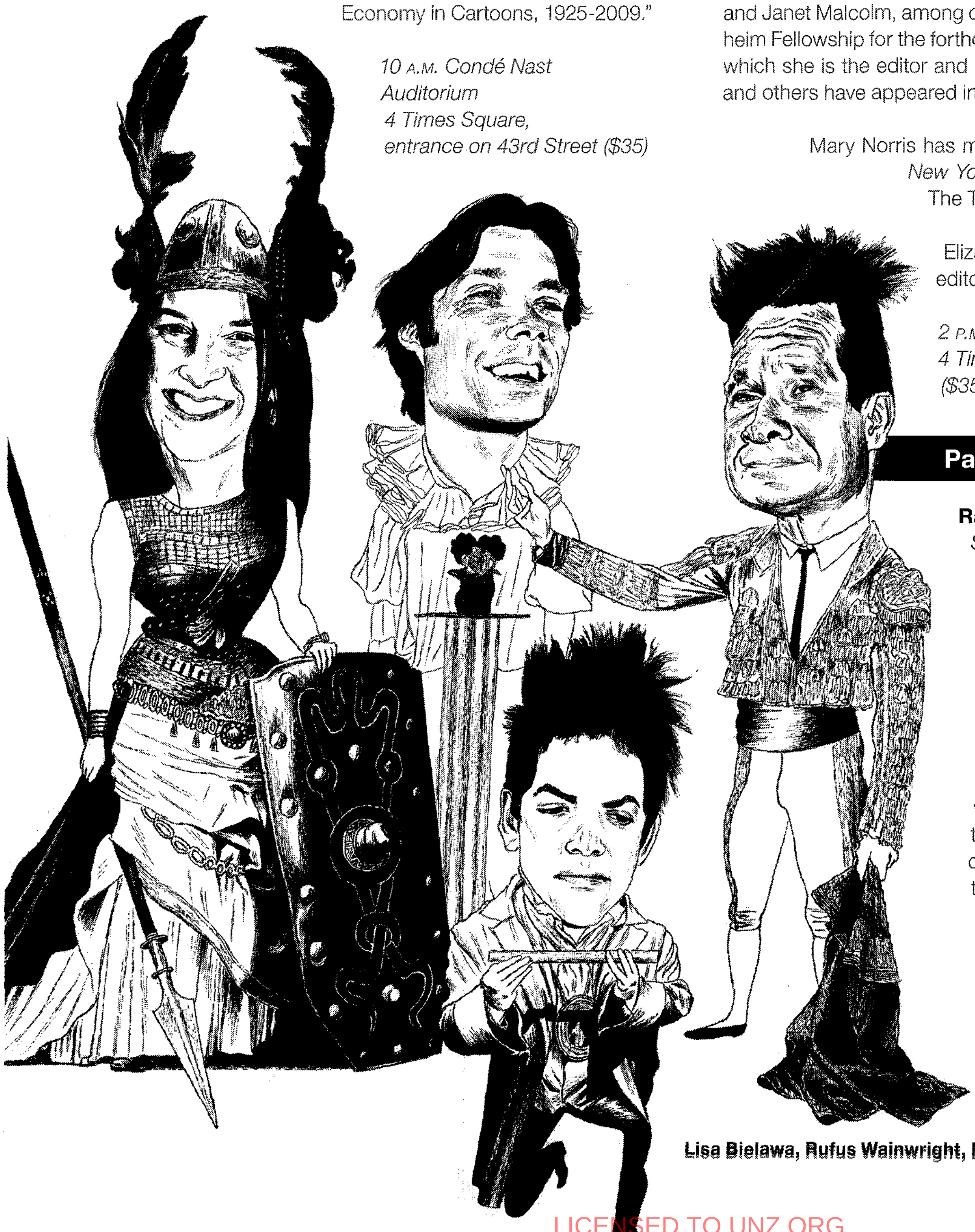
2 P.M. Condé Nast Auditorium
4 Times Square, entrance on 43rd Street ($35)

Panels

Radical Opera
Sonic youth.

With **Lisa Bielawa**, **Nico Muhly**, **Peter Sellars**, and **Rufus Wainwright**. Moderated by **Alex Ross**.

Lisa Bielawa is the recipient of a 2009-10 Rome Prize in Musical Composition. Her piece "Chance Encounter," conceived with the soprano Susan Narucki, for twelve instrumentalists and singer, using overheard speech, premièred in Manhattan's Seward Park and was performed at the Whitney Museum in February. Her Double Violin Concerto for the Boston Modern Orchestra Project will be released next year on a double album, along with her concerto for orchestra "In medias res."



Lisa Bielawa, Rufus Wainwright, Nico Muhly, and Peter Sellars

Nico Muhly's orchestral works have been premièred by the American Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Pops, and the Chicago Symphony. He has released two solo albums, "Speak Volumes" and "Mothertongue," and composed the score for the film "The Reader." He is working on two orchestral works for Britten Sinfonia and an opera for the Metropolitan Opera/Lincoln Center Theatre Commissions Program, about an online romance between two teen-age boys.

Peter Sellars is a theatre, opera, and festival director. His collaborations with the composer John Adams include the operas "Nixon in China," "The Death of Klinghoffer," and "Doctor Atomic," for which he also wrote the libretto. He has directed contemporary versions of "Così Fan Tutte," "The Marriage of Figaro," and "Don Giovanni." His production of "Othello" opens at the Public Theatre in September.

Rufus Wainwright is a singer-songwriter and the son of the folk luminaries Loudon Wainwright III and Kate McGarrigle. His albums include "Poses," "Want One," "Want Two," "Release the Stars," and the concert recording "Rufus Does Judy at Carnegie Hall." His first opera, "Prima Donna," about a day in the life of an opera diva, premièred this summer at the Manchester International Festival.

Alex Ross is *The New Yorker's* music critic. He writes mainly about classical music, covering everything from Renaissance masses to the downtown avant-garde. His first book, "The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century," won the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism. Last year, he was named a MacArthur Fellow.

3 P.M. City Winery
155 Varick Street ($35)

A Humor Revue

Shouts & Murmurs Live

Harold Ross, the founding editor of *The New Yorker*, referred to his magazine as a "comic weekly," filling its pages with the work of the great literary humorists Dorothy Parker, James Thurber, S. J. Perelman, and A. J. Liebling, among others. Carrying on the tradition today are such writers as **Jenny Allen**, **Woody Allen**, **Noah Baumbach**, **Yoni Brenner**, **Ian Frazier**, **Patricia Marx**, **David Owen**, **Amy Ozols**, **Simon Rich**, **Paul Rudnick**, **George Saunders**, **Paul Simms**, and **Calvin Trillin**, all of whom will read selections from their work. Many of these contributors and others are represented in the *New Yorker* humor anthologies "Fierce Pajamas" and "Disquiet, Please!" Hosted by *The New Yorker's* editor, **David Remnick**.

Jenny Allen is the author of "The Long Chalkboard," a book of fables for adults, and "I Got Sick Then I Got Better," a monologue, which she is performing this fall at New York Theatre Workshop. Her most recent Shouts & Murmurs, "I Have to Go Now," appeared in the December 8, 2008, issue of *The New Yorker.*

Woody Allen has written, directed, and acted in dozens of films since the nineteen-sixties. His first piece for *The New Yorker* appeared in 1966; since then, he has contributed forty others, most recently "Tails of Manhattan," about Bernie Madoff, which appeared in the March 30th issue. His comic essays have been collected in many volumes, including "Mere Anarchy" and "The Insanity Defense."

Noah Baumbach is a writer and director whose films include "The Squid and the Whale" and "Margot at the Wedding." His next film, "Greenberg," will be released in 2010. His humor pieces have appeared in *The New Yorker* since 1999; his most recent Shouts & Murmurs, "Buzzed," ran in the May 4th issue.

Yoni Brenner has been contributing to *The New Yorker* since 2007. His most recent Shouts & Murmurs, "Private Thomas," appeared in the July 6th & 13th issue. As a screenwriter, his credits include "Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs," which was released in July.

Ian Frazier has been contributing humor and reporting pieces to *The New Yorker* for thirty-five years. He is the author of nine books, including the humor collections "Dating Your Mom" and "Lamentations of the Father," and the historical narrative "Great Plains." A new book, "Travels in Siberia," parts of which appeared in the magazine in the August 3rd and August 10th & 17th issues, will appear next year.

Patricia Marx has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1989 and writes the magazine's shopping column, On and Off the Avenue. She has written or co-written more than twenty books, including "Meet My Staff," the novel "Him Her Him Again the End of Him," and "Dot in Larryland," with illustrations by Roz Chast.

David Owen is the author of many books, including "Green Metropolis," based on his 2004 *New Yorker* article "Green Manhattan," which is out in September. He has been contributing humor and reporting pieces to the magazine since 1991.

Amy Ozols writes for "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon." Previously, she wrote for the game show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." Her most recent Shouts & Murmurs, "The Road to Recovery," appeared in the August 24th issue of *The New Yorker.*

Simon Rich is a writer for "Saturday Night Live" and the author of two humor collections, "Ant Farm: And Other Desperate Situations" and "Free-Range Chickens," both of which contain pieces that originally appeared in *The New Yorker.* He is at work on his first novel.

Paul Rudnick is the author of two novels, "Social Disease" and "I'll Take It," as well as many screenplays and plays, including "Jeffrey," which won an Obie and an Outer Critics Circle Award. His new humor collection, "I Shudder: And Other Reactions to Life, Death, and New Jersey," is out in September. He has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 1998.

George Saunders has been a contributor of fiction and humor to *The New Yorker* since 1992; many of his pieces for the magazine are collected in "The Braindead Megaphone."

Paul Simms has been contributing to *The New Yorker* since 2004. He was the creator of the sitcom "NewsRadio" and wrote for "Late Night with David Letterman" and "The Larry Sanders Show." More recently, he has written and directed for the HBO series "The Flight of the Conchords."

Calvin Trillin has published many books of humor, including "Uncivil Liberties," "Floater," "Tepper Isn't Going Out," "Obliviously On He Sails," "A Heckuva Job," and "Deciding the Next Decider." He has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 1963.

4 P.M. Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street ($35)

Venues

Angel Orensanz Foundation
172 Norfolk Street

The Bell House
149 7th Street, Brooklyn

Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street

City Winery
155 Varick Street

Condé Nast Auditorium
4 Times Square
(Entrance on 43rd Street)

Condé Nast Executive Dining Room
4 Times Square
(Entrance on 43rd Street)

Directors Guild Theatre
110 West 57th Street

Florence Gould Hall
55 East 59th Street

Frick Collection
1 East 70th Street

Galway Hooker
7 East 36th Street

The Gate
321 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)

(Le) Poisson Rouge
158 Bleecker Street
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)

McNally Jackson Books
52 Prince Street

Stage37
508 West 37th Street

How to Purchase Tickets

Tickets for The New Yorker Festival will go on sale at 12 noon E.T. on Friday, September 18th. There are several ways to purchase tickets:

Online: Get tickets at newyorker.com/festival.

By phone: Call 800-440-6974.

At Ticket HQ: Ten per cent of tickets to all events will be available at Cedar Lake Theatre, at 547 West 26th Street (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues). Tickets will be sold on Friday, October 16th, from 12 noon to 4 P.M. First come, first served.

At the door: A limited number of tickets will be sold at the door to each event one hour before start time, with the exception of Morning at the Frick, Come Hungry, Strings Attached, Inside the Artist's Studio, and Bottoms Up. First come, first served. Cash only.

Harlem Children's Zone

A portion of the ticket proceeds from this year's Festival will be donated to Harlem Children's Zone, which offers a holistic network of education, social services, and community-building programs to children and families in Harlem. The organization uses a unique model that runs programs for children from birth through college, serving more than ten thousand children every year. For more information, visit hcz.org.

Book Signings at McNally Jackson Books

SATURDAY | OCTOBER 17
12 noon
T. Coraghessan Boyle – "The Women"
Aleksandar Hemon – "Love and Obstacles"

1 P.M.
Junot Díaz – "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao"
Mary Gaitskill – "Don't Cry"

2 P.M.
Annie Proulx – "Fine Just the Way It Is: Wyoming Stories 3"

3 P.M.
Malcolm Gladwell – "Outliers: The Story of Success"
Bill James – "The Bill James Gold Mine 2009"

4 P.M.
Paul Rudnick – "I Shudder: And Other Reactions to Life, Death, and New Jersey"
Wallace Shawn – "Essays"

5 P.M.
Robert Mankoff – "On the Money: The Economy in Cartoons, 1925-2009"

SUNDAY | OCTOBER 18
12 noon
Tad Friend – "Cheerful Money: Me, My Family, and the Last Days of Wasp Splendor"
David Grann – "The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon"

1 P.M.
John Cassidy – "How Markets Fail: The Economics of Rational Irrationality"
Paul Goldberger – "Why Architecture Matters" and "Building Up and Tearing Down: Reflections on the Age of Architecture"

2 P.M.
Daniyal Mueenuddin – "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders"
Colson Whitehead – "Sag Harbor"

3 P.M.
Adam Gopnik – "Angels and Ages: A Short Book about Darwin, Lincoln, and Modern Life"
Hendrik Hertzberg – "One Million"

4 P.M.
George Booth – "About Dogs"
Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly – "The TOON Treasury of Classic Children's Comics"

Schedule

FRIDAY | OCTOBER 16

7 P.M.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Yiyun Li
(Le) Poisson Rouge ($25)

David Bezmozgis and Jonathan Franzen
Cedar Lake Theatre ($25)

T. Coraghessan Boyle and Mary Gaitskill
Angel Orensanz Foundation ($25)

Daniyal Mueenuddin and Salman Rushdie
Directors Guild Theatre ($25)

8 P.M.

Brooklyn Playlist
The Bell House ($25)

Tales Out of School
New Yorker* Writers on *The New Yorker
City Winery ($40)

9:30 P.M.

Edwidge Danticat and Junot Díaz
Angel Orensanz Foundation ($25)

Joshua Ferris and Aleksandar Hemon
(Le) Poisson Rouge ($25)

Jonathan Lethem and Colson Whitehead
Directors Guild Theatre ($25)

George Saunders and Gary Shteyngart
Cedar Lake Theatre ($25)

SATURDAY | OCTOBER 17

10 A.M.

Annie Proulx interviewed by Deborah Treisman
Florence Gould Hall ($27)

Rachel Maddow interviewed by Ariel Levy
Stage37 ($27)

Alfred Hitchcock's "Shadow of a Doubt"
Directors Guild Theatre ($20)

New Math
Cedar Lake Theatre ($27)

Mad Men
City Winery ($27)

1 P.M.

Ricky Jay and Mark Singer
City Winery ($27)

Malcolm Gladwell
Florence Gould Hall ($27)

The Music Biz
Cedar Lake Theatre ($27)

1:30 P.M.

Henri-Georges Clouzot's "Quai des Orfèvres"
Directors Guild Theatre ($20)

4 P.M.

Tyler Perry interviewed by Henry Finder
Cedar Lake Theatre ($27)

Simon Schama
Florence Gould Hall ($27)

The Political Scene
City Winery ($27)

Character Actors
Stage37 ($27)

5 P.M.

Jean-Luc Godard's "King Lear"
Directors Guild Theatre ($20)

7:30 P.M.

Loudon Wainwright *III* talks with Susan Morrison
The Bell House ($35)

Wallace Shawn talks with John Lahr
City Winery ($35)

Ian Hunter and Graham Parker talk with Ben Greenman
(Le) Poisson Rouge ($35)

Neko Case talks with Sasha Frere-Jones
Stage37 ($25)

8 P.M.

"Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire"
Directors Guild Theatre ($27)

10 P.M.

James Franco talks with Lauren Collins
Cedar Lake Theatre ($35)

Tilda Swinton talks with Hilton Als
City Winery ($35)

Steve Earle talks with John Seabrook
(Le) Poisson Rouge ($35)

Justin Vernon of Bon Iver talks with Sasha-Frere Jones
Stage37 ($25)

SUNDAY | OCTOBER 18

10 A.M.

Heroes and Antiheroes
Condé Nast Executive Dining Room ($15)

Master Class: Cartooning
Condé Nast Auditorium ($35)

11 A.M.

Tailing Tilley
Galway Hooker ($15)

Morning at the Frick
Frick Collection ($60)

Come Hungry
Ticket buyers will be contacted concerning the starting point. ($100)

James Surowiecki
City Winery ($27)

12 noon

Strings Attached
Ticket buyers will be contacted concerning the location. ($60)

Inside the Artist's Studio
Ticket buyers will be contacted concerning the location. ($60)

Bottoms Up
The Gate ($50)

George Booth interviewed by David Owen
Condé Nast Executive Dining Room ($15)

Master Class: Photography
Condé Nast Auditorium ($35)

1 P.M.

Atul Gawande
Directors Guild Theatre ($27)

2 P.M.

Our Far-Flung Correspondents
Condé Nast Executive Dining Room ($15)

Master Class: Copy Editing
Condé Nast Auditorium ($35)

3 P.M.

Radical Opera
City Winery ($35)

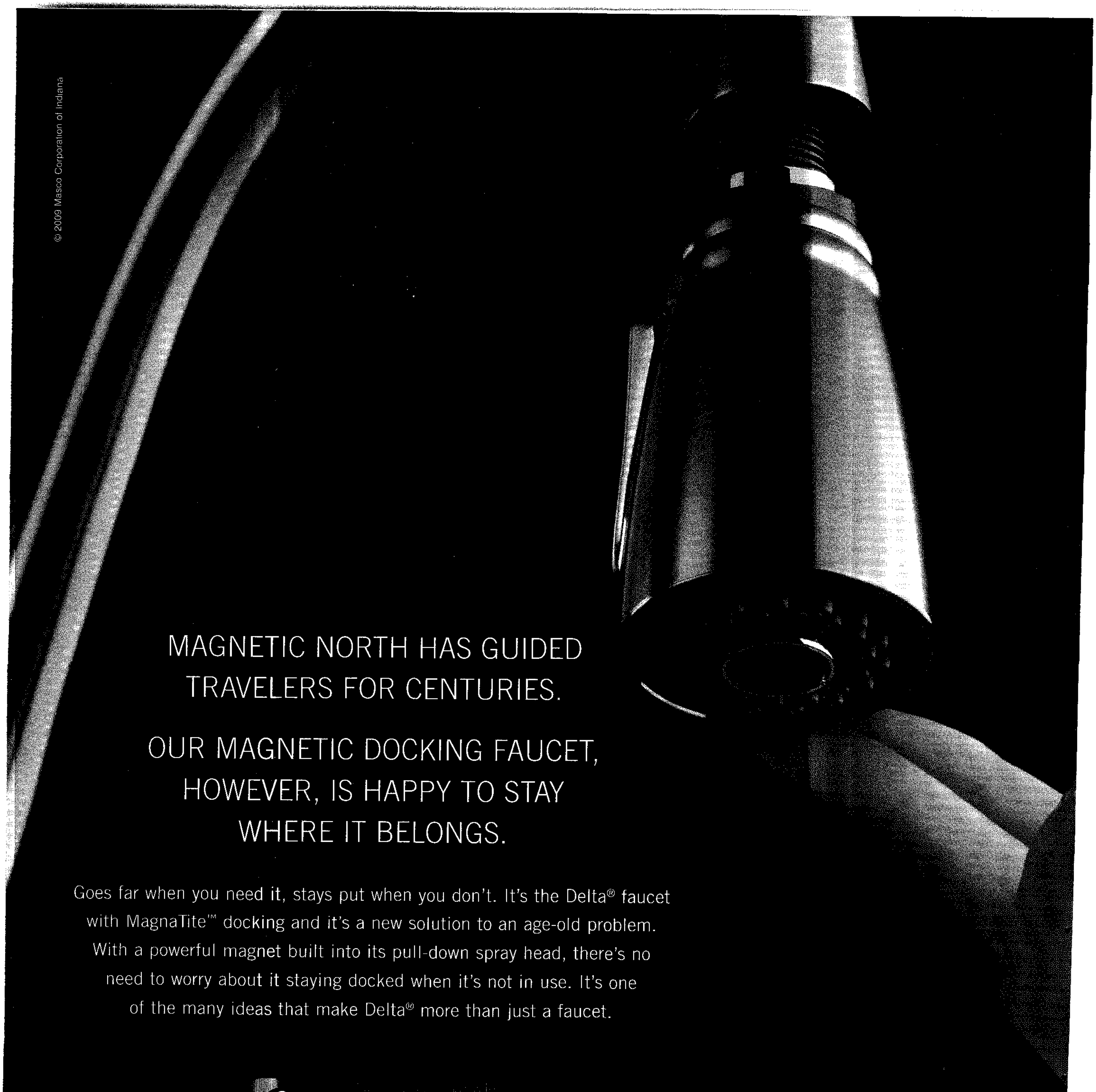
4 P.M.

Shouts & Murmurs Live
Directors Guild Theatre ($35)

Production services provided by the Overland Entertainment Company.

All programming is subject to change. For up-to-date information, please visit newyorker.com/festival. Tickets available at 12 noon E.T. on September 18th, at newyorker.com/festival or by calling 800-440-6974. Tickets will also be sold during Festival weekend at event doors and from noon to 4 P.M. on Friday, October 16th, at Cedar Lake Theatre, 547 West 26th Street. For details and exceptions, please see page 20 of the guide. Please note that purchases are subject to service charges.

© 2009 Masco Corporation of Indiana



MAGNETIC NORTH HAS GUIDED TRAVELERS FOR CENTURIES.

OUR MAGNETIC DOCKING FAUCET, HOWEVER, IS HAPPY TO STAY WHERE IT BELONGS.

Goes far when you need it, stays put when you don't. It's the Delta® faucet with MagnaTite™ docking and it's a new solution to an age-old problem. With a powerful magnet built into its pull-down spray head, there's no need to worry about it staying docked when it's not in use. It's one of the many ideas that make Delta® more than just a faucet.

DELTA®

see what Delta can do™

ALLORA®

deltafaucet.com/magnatitefaucet

"How much is that in years of tuition?"

• •

When he emerged, he was carrying some audio equipment, and was accompanied by a woman clutching a large bottle of Grey Goose vodka. Dumile packed the equipment in the trunk. The woman handed him the bottle, and he hopped in the back. He picked up the new record and groused about the cover art.

"Five, ride around," he said. "I want to hear how it sounds."

A great m.c. is, on one level, a drummer performing a solo. But, more than that, he is a poet, assembling words according to the rules of a particular meter. Dumile offers a darkly humorous take on the life of the Doom character. There is no single narrative, as much as there are variations on a theme, the most constant being his mask. From the song "Beef Rap" off of his album "MM . . . Food": "He wears a mask just to cover the raw flesh / A rather ugly brother with flows that's gorgeous."

Hip-hop feeds on the aggression of post-pubescent males. And Dumile draws on the aggression of a particular type of male who came of age in a particular era. When he claims to "eat rappers like part of a complete breakfast," when he challenges other m.c.s to battle for Atari cartridges, when he yells "Zoinks!" mid-rhyme, he's signalling those who grew up with Saturday-morning cartoons and "The Dukes of Hazzard." For his listeners, his references—"Good Times," popping wheelies, karate classes—evoke lost innocence, even when the topic is grim. On "Hey!," Doom delivers a couplet about some old neighborhood friends, now incarcerated, over a sample from the theme song to "Scooby-Doo":

> To all my brothers who is doing unsettling bids
> You could have got away if it was not for them meddling kids.

"When I do it, I feel like I'm thirteen again," Dumile told me. "I remember, when we were that age, everybody was nice, and everybody was getting nicer. That same well of energy we were drawing from then, I go to there. . . . To me it feels like that time was richer, every second was really five minutes. Being older now, grown, I'm like, what do we really do that's fun? I'm kind of corny when you think about it. What could I rhyme about? Let me see, um, I gotta pay the rent today."

The rest of our day bore this out. We spent the hours in the manner of teenagers with nowhere to be, and I saw that Dumile's music sends me back to adolescence because he lives—at least while he's creating—as though he were back there, too.

We wound through the hills of Los Angeles with "Born Like This" blasting at full volume. Hip-hop is music for warriors—or, at least, for those who imagine themselves as such. I’d listened to “Born Like This” on my iPod during the flight out and come away unmoved. But hearing a song like “Cellz”—with its lengthy jacking of a poem by Charles Bukowski, pounding drums, and high slicing whistles—at high volume changed my mind.

Dumile had said he’d be working by noon; it was now four o’clock. We came off a sharp curve, and he pointed out a large house on a cliff, which the producer Danger Mouse had recently bought. We stopped at a broad opening, high up. You could see the neighborhoods of Mount Washington and Cypress Park, a commuter-train line, the skyscrapers of downtown Los Angeles. With the music still pumping, he walked around for a bit, nodding and making small talk with Five.

Then they hopped back in the car, and Five drove to the studio, a cottage behind a friend’s house. Dumile opened the trunk and pulled out a heavy bag filled with rhyme books, which he’d FedExed out the night before, and passed it to me. “If I’m gonna let you see my rhyme books, you could at least carry the bag,” he said.

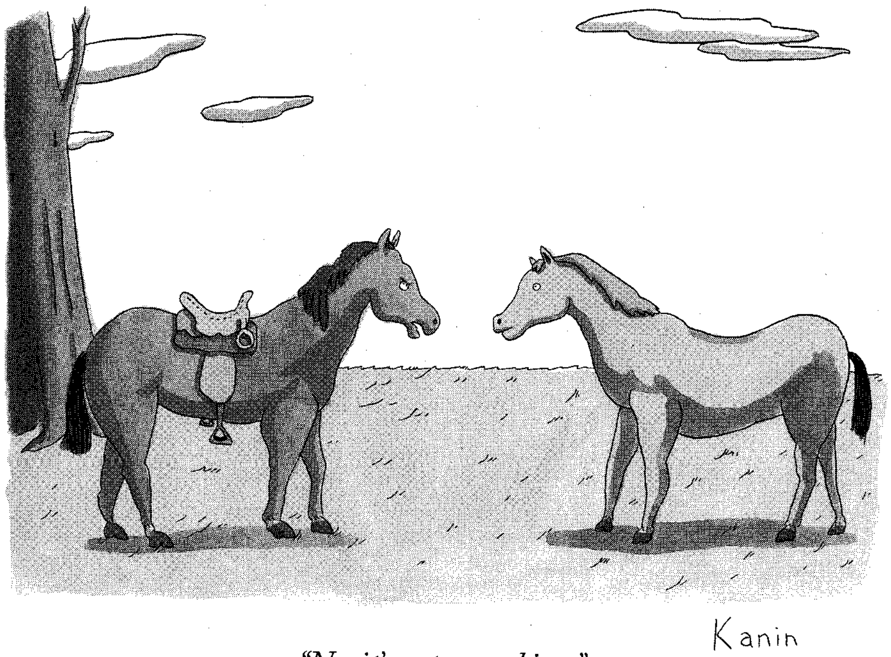
Dumile took some audio equipment inside. Then he reiterated instructions that he’d given me the night before: there was to be no talking while he was working, not from me, from Five, or from him. He fiddled with a two-hundred-and-fifty-gig hard drive until Madlib’s instrumentals pounded out from the speakers, filling the room.

He paused to explain his approach. “When I’m doing a Doom record, I’m arranging it, I’m finding the voices. . . . All I have to do is listen to it and think, Oh shit, that will be funny. I write down whatever would be funny, and get as many ‘whatever would’ funnies in a row and find a way to make them all fit. There’s a certain science to it. In a relatively small period of time, you want it to be, That’s funny, that’s funny, that’s funny, that’s funny. I liken it to comedy standup.”

So do his fans. Online threads about Dumile’s work tend to feature nothing but a series of favorite lines: “Oh my aching hands, from raking in grands / And breaking in mike stands,” or “What? These old things? About to throw ’em away / With the gold rings that make ’em don’t fit like O.J.”

I opened the bag and began paging through the rhyme books. It was a great honor—an m.c. sharing his rhyme books is like a magician sharing notes for his tricks. I half expected a column of light to bloom from the pages. But Dumile’s books were like his songs—scatterbrained and disorganized, a series of potentially humorous couplets. The best ones were written over in black ink two or three times. Few were arranged into verses.

Despite his edict of silence, he spent most of the evening trading jokes with Five, yelling nonsensical phrases (“Flurk! Flurk! Flurk!”) into my tape recorder, making bets centered on Five’s bad Spanish, and drinking beer. By 11 P.M., it was apparent that very little would get done. We walked out around midnight. “Give it a day,” he said, “and see how things sound in the morning.”



“No, it’s not a sex thing.”

When I was twelve, I took a short walk from my parents’ West Baltimore row house to Mondawmin Mall. I rode the escalator up, walked into the music store, flipped through the bound platters, and with my own money purchased my first record, Stetsasonic’s “Talkin All That Jazz.”

That was 1988. R. & B. had devolved into synth-pop, and seemingly every respectable radio station was advertising itself with the tagline “No Rap.” Stetsasonic’s “All That Jazz” was a new generation’s effort to reach back and pull black music out of the mire of disco:

Tell the truth James Brown was old
Until Eric and Ra came with *I Got Soul*.

I played that record for most of the year. When no one was looking, I’d place my fingertips on the wax and scratch, trying to make the record tweet like a bird. That was how I inaugurated the Golden Era—in my small bedroom, doing my best rendition of Jazzy Jeff.

One afternoon last May, I met Stetsasonic’s d.j., Prince Paul, in front of the VH1 building in SoHo. Paul is best known for producing De La Soul’s first three albums, all of them classics of the Golden Era. He also produced the track “The Gas Face.” New York had just started to warm up. At all the cafés, people were seated at outdoor tables, laughing. But Paul was dressed as though he distrusted the recent change in the weather—pants and a short-sleeved brown shirt over white long johns. He had a baseball cap pulled low over his face.

I had talked to him once on the phone, but still I was off balance. He was all of five-nine, yet it was hard not to see him as monumental, as a part of my history. We walked uptown, stopped at a diner, ordered turkey burgers, and talked about his days with Stetsasonic and De La Soul and what had changed.

“Now every m.c. wants a beat tape, like ‘Yo! Gimme a beat,’ ” he said, noting that m.c.s have become more like singersongwriters, with the egos to match. "But back then it was like '3rd Bass? Hmm . . . This and this! These are two songs I hear y'all on.' " Paul recalled working with Dumile for the first time. "He came in rhyme-ready when it was time to record. I met him and his brother Subroc. They were just really nice dudes. . . . I remember shortly after hearing about his brother passing, and then hearing about him going through a struggle with Elektra and that record getting dropped. And then after that I didn't hear from him."

Paul reconnected with Doom after hearing a single off "Operation: Doomsday," and the two have worked together intermittently for the past ten years. Dumile appeared on Paul's "Politics of the Business." Paul did some comic voice-overs for "Born Like This."

Their creative bond extends from a similar outlook toward the past, a sense that rap isn't what it was. "If you go to a rapper today and say, 'Yo, I got better rhymes than you,' he'll go, 'Yeah, you probably do, but I sold more records,' " Paul said. "The pride isn't in the lyrical content."

Two years ago, the rapper 50 Cent challenged Kanye West, not by claiming to be a more creative artist or having superior mike skills but by daring him to sell more records. (50 Cent lost.) The ethos consecrated by Sean (Diddy) Combs—that what sells is what's classic—has essentially carried the day. For the fan who is no longer obsessed with the pose of rebellion, with fending off other young men, or with sexual frustration, beholding hip-hop in the aughts is like stumbling across an old journal and then seeing its most inflammatory and narcissistic elements turned into a marketing plan. All the moments of tenderness (De La Soul's "Eye Know"), idleness (the Roots' "Lazy Afternoon"), and black comedy (Ice Cube's "It Was a Good Day") have been drained away.

On my last day in L.A., I followed Five from my hotel to Dumile's studio. Today, Five explained, the ground rules were to be strictly followed. There was to be absolutely no talking and no joking. When I arrived, Dumile was sitting behind his computer cycling through the Madlib beats and taking notes. He was replaying video news reports about the chimp who had attacked a woman in Connecticut that February. The beat on loop was the same one he'd played the night before—jangling piano and a man muttering.

He clicked a button, and the news reports played over the beat. I struggled to find some connection between the two but said nothing. Dumile explained that he was working on retelling the story from the chimp's perspective.

"I'm digging through these to get pictures for the actual facts of the piece," he said. "It's still the fact of shooting a monkey. What is this disrespect for life?"

He took his pad and walked outside, sat at picnic table, and started to write. I drove off to make a Starbucks run for the group. I plugged in my iPod and cranked up the Yeah Yeah Yeahs.

Dumile's success, by hip-hop standards, has been modest. He has no platinum or gold records, or anything that could be called a hit. He is uninterested in hooks, displays a flagrant disregard for linear storytelling, and insists on cutting songs that time out before the three-minute mark. "The Gas Face" made him a local celebrity in 1989. He says that he got into a fight with some jealous rivals just before he was scheduled to perform the track on "The Arsenio Hall Show," and he had to do the show with his arm in a cast. "Fame never helped the situation," he told me. "Fame, in the streets, is something you don't want." As a member of KMD, alongside his brother, Dumile seemed to enjoy the spotlight, but he has never reconciled himself to performing as a solo act—hence his use of Doomposters. He'd rather be alone in a studio writing about a pet chimp gone berserk.

When I returned, Dumile had finished writing and come back inside to record. He had asked that I not watch him do this, but I could hear him reciting muffled lyrics. When the music paused, he peeked out and Five handed him a Frappuccino. I could see his mask hanging from a mike stand. He nodded and closed the door, and that was the last I saw of the villain. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Lake Oswego (Ore.) Review.

Following up a report of screaming at a residence on McVey Avenue, an officer defused a situation by assisting in the making of peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches.

SEDARIS READS SEDARIS. SEAN PENN READS BOB DYLAN. GLADWELL READS GLADWELL. DONALD SUTHERLAND READS ERNEST HEMINGWAY. STEPHEN KING READS STEPHEN KING. OBAMA READS OBAMA.

Listen for yourself.

Authors read their own works.

Artists perform classic titles.

Choose from over 60,000 selections.

Works with iPod®, BlackBerry®, and more.

audible.com

Quality furniture.
Maine-made.

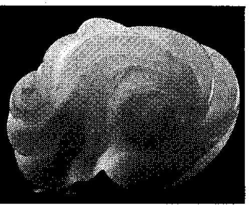
SALE THROUGH SEPT. 30TH

866-883-3366
www.chiltons.com
CHILTON

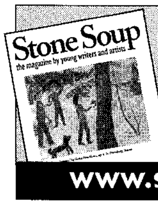
The Retreat at Sheppard Pratt

- Treating all psychiatric conditions
- Intermediate length of stay
- Elegantly appointed environment
- NEW: TMS for depression

Baltimore, MD 410-938-4040 www.retreatatsp.org
The Retreat does not accept insurance.



FANDANGO
Alabaster 16 1/2" h
SoldwedelSculptures.com
1-800-337-8907



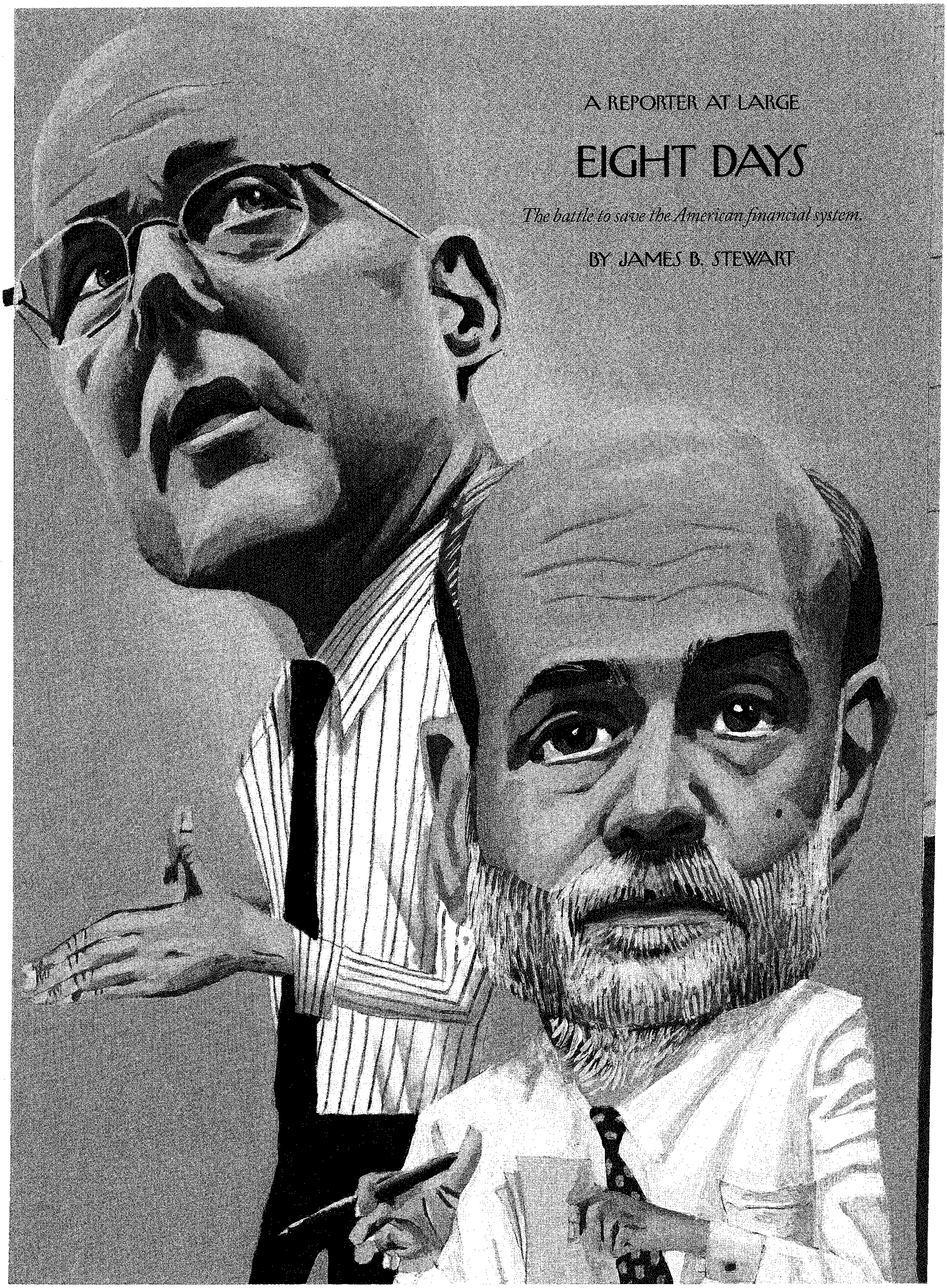
Stone Soup
The Literary Magazine by Children
A perfect gift to inspire creativity
$37/yr (6 issues) • 800-447-4569
stories • poems • art • ages 8-13
www.stonesoup.com

A REPORTER AT LARGE

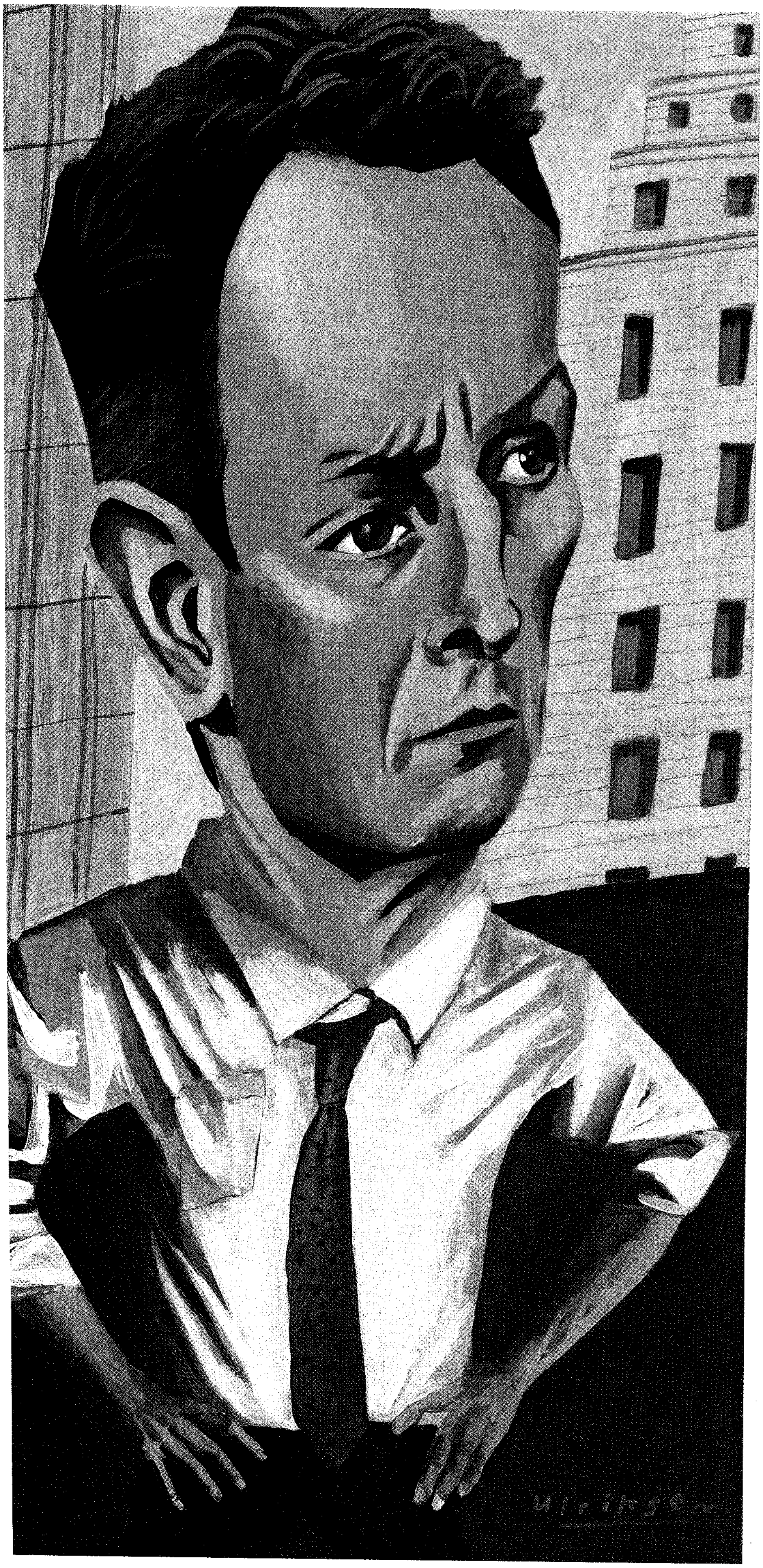
EIGHT DAYS

The battle to save the American financial system.

BY JAMES B. STEWART



Henry Paulson, Ben Bernanke, and Timothy Geithner were willing to countenance government intervention when markets failed.



is outraged both Republicans and Democrats. Illustrations by Mark Ulriksen.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Let's don't be alarmist.

The most important week in American financial history since the Great Depression began at 8 A.M. on a Friday in the middle of September last year. I have pieced together this account of it from scores of interviews with participants and observers. Many of the principals agreed to be interviewed, including Henry Paulson, who was Secretary of the Treasury; Ben Bernanke, the chairman of the Federal Reserve System; and Timothy Geithner, who was president of the New York Federal Reserve. As time has passed, memories inevitably have been colored by hindsight and efforts to shade the truth, to affix blame and claim credit, but, as one Treasury official told me, referring to himself and his colleagues, "For better or worse, we're the ones responsible. The more accurately the story is told, the better our policies will be received."

As Bernanke hurried to the Department of the Treasury for his weekly breakfast with Secretary Paulson, crisis loomed. Lehman Brothers Holdings, Inc., a global financial-services firm that started out as a drygoods store in 1850, faced imminent bankruptcy. Its collapse could be catastrophic, and a solution had to be found that weekend, before markets opened on Monday. Paulson, a former chairman of the powerful investment bank Goldman Sachs, is tall, excitable, garrulous, and supremely self-confident. Reared as a Christian Scientist in the affluent Chicago suburb of Barrington Hills, he was an Eagle Scout in high school and a football player at Dartmouth before graduating from Harvard Business School. Paulson doesn't use e-mail and tends to ask rapid-fire questions, in a distinctive, rasping voice. He once told a colleague, "I didn't get the charm gene."

Nor, evidently, did Bernanke, a soft-spoken former professor of economics at Stanford and Princeton. When White House officials first interviewed Bernanke for the post of Fed chairman, he was so quiet they worried that he lacked, as one put it, "assertiveness." He grew up in a small town in South Carolina, played alto saxophone in the marching band, and wrote an unpublished novel. He graduated from Harvard summa cum laude, and earned a Ph.D. in economics at

M.I.T. He is an expert in the economic history of the Great Depression.

Both men were appointed by President George W. Bush, but, unlike the Administration's free-market absolutists, they, along with Geithner, considered themselves pragmatists—proponents of government action when markets fail. The two camps had long coexisted among Republicans, sometimes uneasily, but during the Bush Administration, with its anti-regulation rhetoric and cuts in marginal tax rates, free-market proponents seemed to be in their element. Bernanke's predecessor at the Fed, Alan Greenspan, kept interest rates exceptionally low. Regulators at the Securities and Exchange Commission tolerated high leverage at investment banks, and the Fed and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation tolerated lax real-estate lending standards. Housing prices shot up. In October, 2007, the Dow Jones Industrial Average reached a peak of 14,093. Unheeded by Bernanke, Paulson, or just about anyone in a position of authority, an asset bubble had grown to perilous and historic proportions.

That year, the bubble had begun to deflate. Defaults among subprime-mortgage borrowers rose, and then the elaborate infrastructure of mortgage-backed securities started to erode. In an attempt to contain the damage, Paulson and Bernanke presided over what many considered the greatest government intrusion into markets and finance since the nineteen-thirties.

In March, 2008, the government ushered the failing investment bank Bear Stearns into a merger with JPMorgan Chase, a deal that was made possible by $29 billion of government financing for Bear Stearns' troubled assets. In early September, the Treasury rescued the government-backed private mortgage agencies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, pledging up to $200 billion in capital. Such interventions put taxpayer money at risk and made a mockery of the notion of "moral hazard," a guiding principle of economics which posits that unless actors bear the consequences of their actions they will act recklessly.

Public criticism of Paulson and Bernanke was scathing. The bailouts had brought into rare alignment the Republican right wing, averse to any tampering with the free market, and the Democratic left, outraged by the government rescue of Wall Street's overpaid élite. Senator Jim Bunning, Republican of Kentucky, called for the two men to resign, and argued that the bailouts were "a calamity for our free market system." He stated, "Simply put, it is socialism," and told a Bloomberg journalist that Paulson was "acting like the minister of finance in China." Nouriel Roubini, an economics professor at New York University's Stern School of Business, who had warned about the housing bubble back in 2004, declared that "socialism is indeed alive and well in America," but with a twist: "This is socialism for the rich, the well connected, and Wall Street."

The previous afternoon, September 11th, Timothy Geithner, at the New York Fed, had told Paulson and Bernanke that Lehman was unlikely to be able to open for business on Monday. Since its origins, in cotton trading, Lehman had underwritten countless stock and bond offerings, had become a force in mergers and acquisitions, and was perhaps best known for its bond index, the equivalent of the Dow Jones Industrial Average for stocks. In 2005 and 2006, it was the largest underwriter of subprime-mortgage-backed securities.

As recently as 2007, Lehman had reported record profits, thanks largely to its leverage of thirty to one, meaning that for every dollar of tangible capital it had thirty dollars of debt. Most of its assets were funded by borrowed money, and now, given the steep decline in mortgage-backed securities, no one believed that the assets were worth their nominal value of $640 billion; Lehman's share price was down ninety-four per cent from the previous year. A run on its assets was already under way, its liquidity was vanishing, and its stock price had fallen by forty-two per cent just the previous day; it couldn't survive the weekend. Global markets and the financial system were far more fragile than they had been in March, when Bear Stearns faltered, and Geithner, warning that the consequences of a Lehman bankruptcy would be quite bad, argued that an alternative had to be found. Otherwise, he said, the damage almost certainly would not be contained.

Bernanke, coming from a different perspective, had arrived at much the same position. As a scholar of the Depression, he had argued that the collapse of banks and other financial institutions at the time had made the Depression much worse by constricting credit. He had become a proponent of intervening to provide liquidity and encourage lending. He argued that the risks of insufficient action—lack of action had led Japan into a prolonged slump in the nineteen-nineties—were far greater than those of overdoing it.

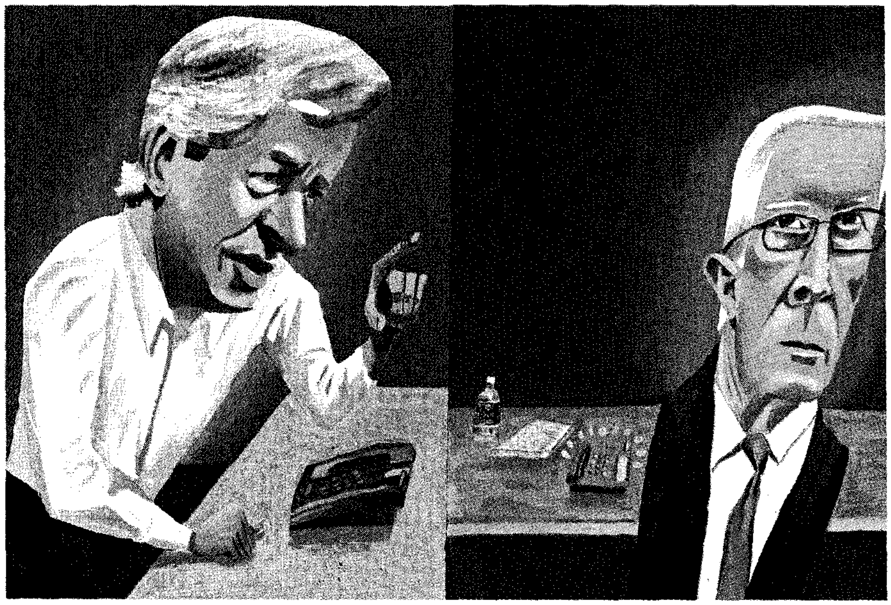
Paulson had headed Goldman's investment-banking operations, including mergers and acquisitions. As its chief executive, he had first opposed, then embraced, the firm's decision, in 1999, to go public, showing both flexibility and decisiveness.

But as Paulson and Bernanke sat down on September 12th the morning news included reports in which anonymous Treasury officials appeared to say that Paulson was ruling out the possibility of any government financial assistance to Lehman.

Paulson acknowledged to Bernanke that he had authorized the comments. He was under intense political pressure from the White House and Capitol Hill to curb the furor over the rescue of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac the previous weekend, as well as continuing resentment over Bear Stearns. More important, every private business he had spoken with about acquiring Lehman was insisting on some kind of government funding. Nevertheless, Paulson assured Bernanke, he was committed to finding a buyer.

All summer, Paulson had been pressing Lehman's chairman and chief executive, Richard S. Fuld, Jr., to find a buyer or a major investor for the firm. Fuld, at sixty-two, was intensely aggressive. He joined Lehman Brothers in 1969, as a trader, and had subsequently driven Lehman's ambitious expansion. But Fuld had been slow to grasp the severity of the firm's plight, and Paulson was frustrated that Fuld kept insisting on what Paulson deemed unrealistic terms, including too high a price. (Fuld's lawyer did not reply to requests for comment for this account.) As a result, Paulson had taken it upon himself to find a buyer, and he had come up with two serious candidates: Bank of America and Barclays, one of the largest banks in the U.K.

Bernanke, too, had talked to Kenneth Lewis, the chairman and C.E.O. of Bank of America. Lewis, a native of Walnut Grove, Mississippi, and a graduate of Georgia State, had joined a small regional bank, North Carolina National, in 1969, as a credit analyst, and had worked his way up the ranks as the bank transformed itself into NationsBank Corporation, by swallowing a succession of other banks and thrifts, and then, in 1998, into Bank of America, whose headquarters were moved from San Francisco to Charlotte. Lewis became the bank's C.E.O. in 2001. He had never fit in with his Wall Street or West Coast counterparts, and once remarked, "I've had all of the fun I can stand in investment banking at the moment." Unlike commercial banks, which take deposits and make loans, investment banks raise capital for an array of financial services, from underwriting stock and bond offerings, to managing corporate takeovers, to trading, acting both for clients and for themselves. Bank of America was a commercial bank, and Lehman was an investment bank, but Lewis was interested in it anyway—provided that the government was willing to lend against Lehman's bad assets.



When Jamie Dimon, the C.E.O. of JPMorgan Chase, learned that A.I.G. faced a disastrous cash crisis, his message to Robert Willumstad, the chief executive, one participant recalled, was blunt: "Stop pussyfooting around."

Paulson had urged Lewis and Fuld to talk. Bank of America auditors were now trying to determine how much government assistance the bank would need. Meanwhile, Barclays' president, Bob Diamond, an American, saw Lehman as an opportunity to increase Barclays' U.S. investment-banking operations. Paulson, in their first conversation, had been typically direct: "Bob, there's no government money."

"I hear you," Diamond replied. "We'll try." He took Paulson's comments as sincere but not necessarily definitive. Barclays would see what it could offer for Lehman; if there was a gap, maybe the government would step in after all.

In the case of Bear Stearns, the Fed had relied on emergency powers, bestowed by the Federal Reserve Act, that allow it to lend in "unusual and exigent circumstances," when the loans are "secured to the satisfaction" of the Fed. JPMorgan had guaranteed Bear's obligations until the deal closed.

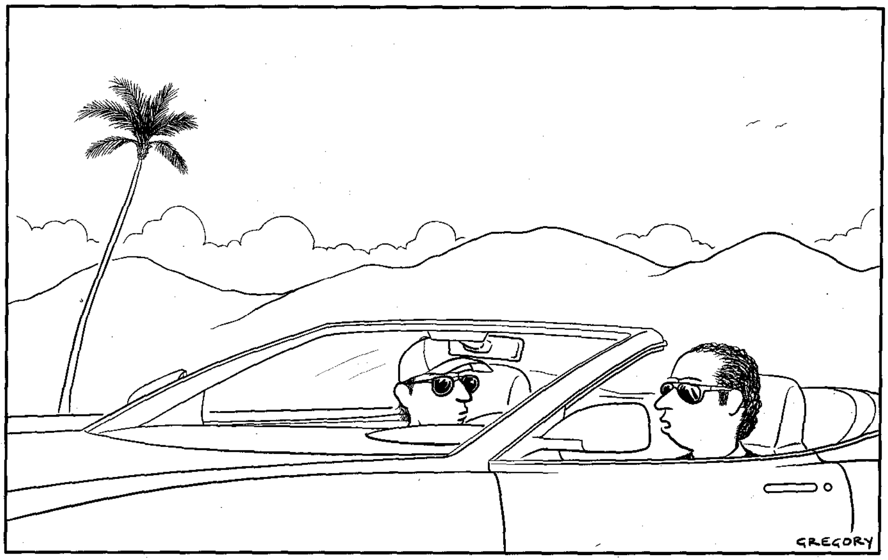
Over breakfast, Bernanke and Paulson discussed a plan, first proposed by Paulson the day before, to engineer a similar "private sector" solution, whereby Bank of America or Barclays would indeed receive financing for Lehman's troubled assets—but not from the government. Instead, other banks would be asked to join a consortium, in order to spread the risk. In other words, Wall Street's strongest competitors would be asked to put their differences aside and act together for the common good. There was precedent for this in the rescue of Long-Term Capital Management, in 1998, when William McDonough, the president of the New York Fed, summoned bankers to address that crisis. Surely the bankers would recognize that the failure of Lehman imperilled them all.

Christopher Flowers, the billionaire founder of the private-equity firm J. C. Flowers & Company and a self-described "lowlife grave dancer" with an eye for failing banks, found himself, Zelig-like, in the midst of the week's deal-making. Slender, bespectacled, and rumpled, Flowers was a math whiz who liked chess, and those skills made him a formidable opponent in the intricate moves of financial takeovers—in some cases as an adviser to firms doing deals, in others as an actual investor.

Flowers knew Paulson well, having spent twenty years at Goldman Sachs, and had worked with Bank of America officials in the merger with NationsBank. He talked regularly to Maurice (Hank) Greenberg, the former chief executive of the giant insurance conglomerate A.I.G., and did business with others in the insurance industry, especially executives at Germany's Allianz.

Earlier in the week, a Bank of America official told Flowers that the firm was considering buying Lehman and said that it wanted him as a partner in the deal. Flowers and a Bank of America team had spent the previous twenty-four hours at a midtown law office going over Lehman's books. Its finances turned out to be far worse than Flowers had expected. The exposure to risky residential mortgages was widely known, but not the firm's $32-billion portfolio of commercial-real-estate assets, much of it of dubious quality.

Then an A.I.G. executive asked him to join a meeting at A.I.G.'s headquarters, in lower Manhattan. "What's the problem?" Flowers asked. A.I.G., it turned out, was facing a liquidity crisis, the result of disastrous bets made by its Financial Products division, based in London. A.I.G. Financial Products had become one of the largest issuers of credit-default swaps, a product similar to insurance: the buyer pays the company in return for a promise of reimbursement in the event of default on a bond or other debt security. If the likelihood of default increased, A.I.G. had to post collateral with its swaps buyers, or counterparties, to guarantee eventual payment. A.I.G. had been a pioneer in credit-default swaps, barely ten years earlier, and since then had amassed hun-



"The trailer didn't live up to the teaser."

• •

dreds of billions of dollars in exposure.

The risk to A.I.G. from the huge portfolio had seemed minimal, since the likelihood of default in any given transaction was low. As a result, A.I.G. hadn't hedged its own exposure to its swap portfolio, and was earning enormous profits on the business. But during the summer of 2008, as increasing numbers of borrowers became unable to pay their mortgages, default rates rose. The U.S. ratings agencies began a wholesale downgrade of mortgage-backed securities, triggering demands that A.I.G. provide ever-larger amounts of collateral to buyers of its swaps. It wasn't clear how A.I.G. could come up with the cash.

When Flowers and a group from his firm arrived, dozens of investment bankers, private-equity investors, and A.I.G. officials were meeting in various conference rooms. Flowers and his team were given their own conference room, where they and some A.I.G. finance officers examined a spreadsheet, tracking the parent company's cash flow and liquidity. The cash-flow projections showed A.I.G. to be in dire need of capital. It was facing a $6-billion cash shortfall by the following Wednesday, a figure that would rise to $25 billion the next week, and $39 billion the week after that.

Flowers looked up from the figures. "Bankruptcy," he said.

"Wait a minute," one of the A.I.G. finance officers replied. "Let's don't be alarmist."

"All I know is if you don't pay six billion next week you're going to have some very unhappy people," Flowers replied.

Robert Willumstad, A.I.G.'s chief executive, walked in as the group was eating sandwiches. Willumstad, a reserved old-school banker and twenty-year Citigroup executive who lost a succession struggle, had always wanted to run a large public company. He got his chance in June, when the board of A.I.G.—at its peak the world's largest insurance company—ousted the company's chief. Willumstad, who had been the board chairman, had formulated an ambitious restructuring and turnaround plan and was just beginning to implement it. But the deterioration in the Financial Products division and the mounting collateral demands were sources of growing concern. Willumstad had hired JPMorgan to advise A.I.G. and help it raise capital.

That morning, Willumstad had called Geithner at the New York Fed, concerned that the ratings agencies were going to downgrade A.I.G., perhaps as soon as Monday. Depending on the severity of the downgrade, it would prompt more collateral calls, of anywhere from $13 billion to $18 billion. A.I.G.'s cash crisis was potentially catastrophic. Willumstad told Geithner that he needed to raise $20 billion. A.I.G., an insurance company, was even farther from the Fed's mandate than Lehman. Geithner stressed that A.I.G. needed to find a private-sector solution, but he agreed to send some Fed officials over to assess the situation.

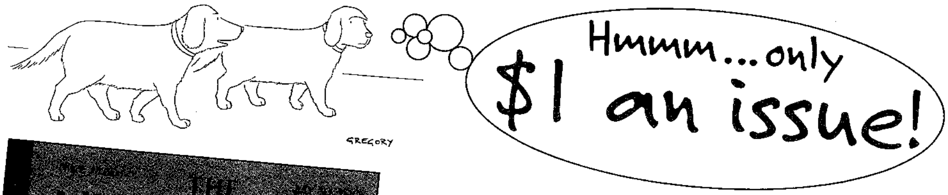
Flowers and Willumstad also called Jamie Dimon, the C.E.O. of JPMorgan. Dimon was even more forceful. As one participant recalls, "His message was: Stop pussyfooting around. Get real, get serious. This is urgent."

"Call Warren Buffett," Flowers told Willumstad, and gave him the number of Buffett's private phone. "Don't even wait one second."

Buffett answered, and Willumstad described the liquidity crisis. Buffett asked some questions and said that he needed more time. Later, he called back to say that he might be interested in some of A.I.G.'s businesses if they were for sale, but he didn't want to get involved with the parent company. Always reluctant to invest in companies whose operations he didn't thoroughly understand, Buffett said that A.I.G. was too complicated. (Buffett did not respond to requests for comment for this account.)

That afternoon, Fed staff members called a number of Wall Street C.E.O.s and asked them to attend an emergency meeting. Among the C.E.O.s were Jamie Dimon; Vikram Pandit, of Citigroup; Brady Dougan, of Credit Suisse Group; John Thain, of Merrill Lynch; John Mack, of Morgan Stanley; and Lloyd Blankfein, Paulson's successor at Goldman Sachs. As one veteran of the Long-Term Capital Management rescue remarked, "That kind of call is never good news."

At 6 P.M., a line of black town cars and S.U.V.s made their way along Maiden Lane, in lower Manhattan, and entered the garage of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, a seventeen-story Italian Renaissance-style fortress. (Underground, in the bank's vault, is the largest stockpile of monetary gold in the world.) The New York Fed implements the monetary policy set by the Federal Reserve Board, in Washington, and oversees the banks in the nation's financial capital. Timothy Geithner had become president of the New York Fed, after a long career in the Treasury Department, on the recommendation of two former Treasury Secretaries, Lawrence Summers and Robert Rubin. Although he had degrees in Asian Studies and government from Dartmouth, and a



THE NEW YORKER

Use this card to get *The New Yorker* for 78% off the cover price. That's only $1.00 an issue. Order two years for just 82¢ per issue!

Mr./Mrs./Ms. (circle one) Please Print

Street

Apt. No.

City

State

Zip

I'll take the best deal!

☐ 2 yrs. (94 issues) only $77 (that's only 82¢ per issue)
☐ 1 yr. (47 issues) only $47 (that's $1.00 per issue)

☐ Payment enclosed
☐ Bill me later

Canadian annual price is $90 U.S, including GST and HST where applicable. Please include applicable sales tax. First issue mails within 6 weeks. The one-year newsstand cost of *The New Yorker* is $234.53.

THE NEW YORKER

J9JS31

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 107 BOONE IA
POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

THE NEW YORKER
PO BOX 37684
BOONE IA 50037-2684

graduate degree in East Asian Studies and international economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Geithner lacked a Ph.D. and an M.B.A.; he also lacked experience on Wall Street and in banking. He was forty-seven but looked much younger, and some felt that he lacked the gravitas to be a Fed president. But he seemed to have no trouble holding his own in discussions with Summers and Bernanke, sometimes punctuating his remarks with profanity, and thereby injecting some blunt common sense into the debates.

A number of the C.E.O.s brought their chief financial officers to the meeting. Several European banks, including Deutsche Bank, Royal Bank of Scotland, and BNP Paribas, sent their ranking officers who were in New York. The meeting took place in a conference room off the building's lobby. Paulson was there, too, and he and Geithner sat at a large rectangular table, surrounded by other government officials.

The chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Christopher Cox, was also present. Cox, a former Republican congressman who had represented Orange County, California, for seventeen years, was on hand as a regulator, since Lehman and other investment banks are subject to S.E.C. oversight.

Geithner thanked the bankers for coming on short notice, then turned the meeting over to Paulson, who said that, despite the rescues of Bear Stearns and Fannie and Freddie, there would be no government money for Lehman. Fortunately, there were two potential saviors. Paulson didn't name them, but everyone present assumed that they were Barclays and Bank of America, both conspicuously absent from the meeting. Still, there was likely to be a pool of Lehman assets that some buyers would not take. It would be up to the C.E.O.s in the room to finance that pool.

Paulson now acknowledges, as some in the room suspected, that the government was more amenable to funding a rescue than it let on. "We said, 'No public money,'" he told me. "We said this publicly. We repeated it when these guys came in. But to ourselves we said, 'If there's a chance to put in public money and avert a disaster, we're open to it.'"

Speaking for the Federal Reserve, Geithner noted that Lehman's trouble had been highly visible, and that investors had had weeks, if not months, to prepare for its demise. Even so, he said, a Lehman failure could be "catastrophic," and it would likely be impossible to contain the damage entirely.

Cox told the C.E.O.s he realized that they were usually competitors. However, he said, their collective well-being turned on a well-functioning market, and the purpose of the meeting was to restore that market.

Lehman wasn't the only vulnerable investment bank. Even if it found a buyer, who would be next to face a run, and possible ruin?

Paulson reminded the C.E.O.s that Lehman was unlikely to open for business on Monday morning, so they had just forty-eight hours to resolve the crisis.

Geithner divided the C.E.O.s into three working groups: the first, led by Goldman Sachs and Credit Suisse, was asked to value Lehman's troubled assets and assess the amount that the firms would have to finance. The second, which included Merrill Lynch, Citigroup, and Morgan Stanley, was told to consider various structures under which Lehman could be sold and its bad assets recapitalized. The third was told to prepare for a Lehman bankruptcy.

The meeting ended at about nine-thirty, and the working groups agreed to reconvene the next morning.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

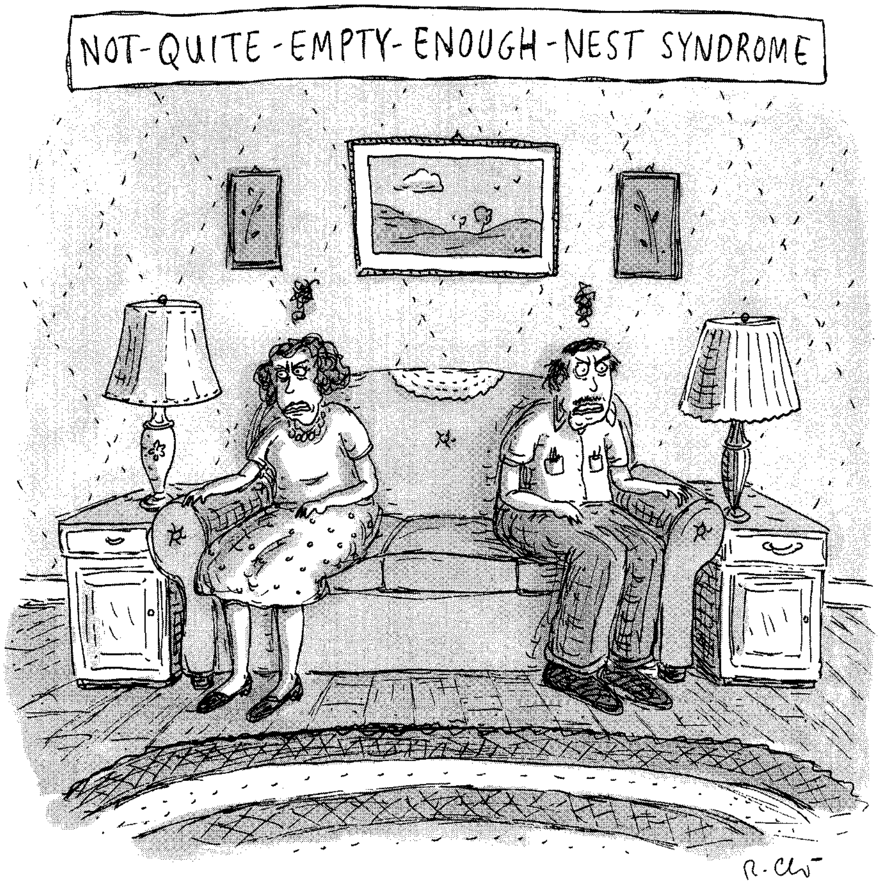
Have you been watching A.I.G.?

At 8 A.M., the Wall Street C.E.O.s, dressed in slacks and sports shirts, reassembled in the Fed conference room, some carrying coffee and crumb cake. Paulson and Geithner said that Barclays was the most likely buyer for Lehman but that negotiations with Bank of America were continuing. In either case, there had to be a "private solution" for the toxic assets.

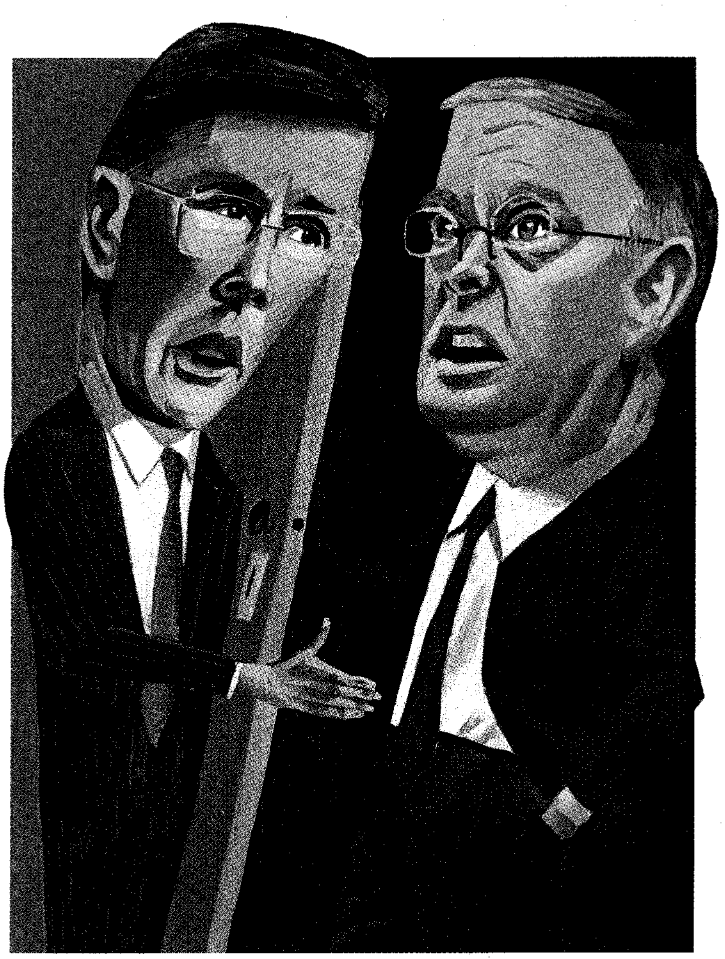
The chief executives were unsure how expensive that solution might be. And why should Wall Street firms finance a transaction to benefit a competitor like Barclays?

Dimon spoke up. "Look, we're all in a fix. This is something we have to do in the best interests of the global financial system."

Geithner again broke the group into teams, saying that they would reconvene in several hours. When they did, the



bankers reported that they were thinking about establishing a revolving line of credit to support other banks that might find themselves in Lehman’s predicament. But Geithner had asked them to focus on Lehman. “You guys have got to try harder!” he insisted. Throughout the day, when members of the various groups passed in the Fed corridors, they asked one another, “Are you trying harder?”



“I didn’t come here to sell the company,” John Thain, of Merrill Lynch, told Bank of America’s Ken Lewis. “That’s what I’m interested in,” Lewis said.

John Thain, of Merrill Lynch, worried, like the others, that a resolution of the Lehman crisis would just shift the crisis to the next most vulnerable bank, which might well be Merrill. Thain, who is fifty-four, grew up in Antioch, Illinois, and first came to prominence at Goldman Sachs, where he advanced rapidly. He is trim and square-jawed, with thick hair and brown eyes and a resemblance to Clark Kent. He studied engineering at M.I.T. and received an M.B.A. from Harvard. He had been a co-head of Goldman’s complex mortgage operations before being named chief operating officer by Paulson. He left to become chief executive of the troubled New York Stock Exchange, successfully took it public, and gained a reputation as a turnaround expert.

Merrill was also in trouble when it approached Thain, in 2007. It had just fired Stanley O’Neal, who, as chief executive, had made Merrill one of the largest underwriters of mortgage-backed securities, a strategy that proved disastrous when the housing bubble burst. Merrill’s board offered Thain a $15-million signing bonus. He had assumed the position in December, just as the subprime crisis was eroding the firm’s balance sheet.

Thain immediately shook up Merrill’s hidebound culture by recruiting two of his former colleagues from Goldman, with lavish guarantees: Thomas Montag, as the head of global sales and trading (with a reported pay package of $39.4 million), and Peter Kraus, as the head of global strategy (with a $29.4-million contract). Each man also received millions in Merrill stock to replace his Goldman holdings. Thain hired the Los Angeles decorator Michael Smith to renovate his office and adjoining conference rooms, at a cost of more than a million dollars.

It wasn’t Thain’s pay or his spending, though, that annoyed Merrill’s rank and file. It was his—and his former Goldman colleagues’—superior manner. “He made a point of making it clear that the Merrill people were inferior to the Goldman people,” a former Merrill executive says. “He was disappointed in the quality of the infrastructure and the people at Merrill. Of course, he had good reason to be. They were in the process of losing tens of billions of dollars.” (Thain disputes this characterization.)

The highest-ranking Merrill official to survive the transition was Gregory Fleming, who some at Merrill had thought would succeed O’Neal. Wanting to maintain some continuity, Thain kept him on as president.

Earlier that morning, Fleming had called Thain at home, in Westchester County. For weeks, Fleming had wanted to prepare various contingency schemes for Merrill. The best hope for a possible rescuer was Bank of America, which had twice tried to get Merrill into merger talks but had been rebuffed. Now that Bank of America was negotiating to buy Lehman, Fleming was even more insistent. “It’s time to call Ken Lewis,” he said.

In Thain’s view, Merrill just needed time for the market to stabilize in order to generate more earnings. He thought that Fleming sounded hysterical, and suspected that Fleming’s sudden eagerness to sell the company reflected, at least in part, resentment at having been passed over in favor of an outsider. Fleming, for his part, suspected that Thain was resisting his suggestion in order to protect his job as chief executive.

Later that day, Lehman officials met with the team led by Goldman and Credit Suisse, which was trying to quantify the “hole” in Lehman’s balance sheet—the amount by which liabilities exceeded assets. The Lehman people discussed the problems on the balance sheet, the quality of their assets, and the specifics of the liquidity crisis, including a $5-billion collateral call that week from JPMorgan Chase, Lehman’s clearing bank.

Afterward, the Goldman and Credit Suisse team told the C.E.O.s that the “hole” appeared to amount to tens of billions of dollars. Lehman’s commercial-real-estate assets, in particular, were being carried on the firm’s books at a far higher value than was realistic. As one participant put it, “The air kind of went out of the room.” Thain was particularly unnerved. JPMorgan was Merrill's clearing bank, too.

In the building's lobby after the meeting, Thain discussed the developments with Peter Kraus, one of the Goldman bankers he had hired, and Peter Kelly, Merrill's general counsel for operating businesses. "I think they're really going to let Lehman go under," he said. Reconsidering his earlier rebuff of Fleming, Thain stepped outside the building and called Ken Lewis at home in North Carolina, and told him, "I think we should discuss some strategic options."

Lewis immediately flew to New York, and a few hours later answered the door when Thain arrived at Bank of America's corporate apartment, in the Time Warner Center. The two men were alone. "We're interested in having Bank of America buy a 9.9-per-cent stake and put at our disposal a multibillion-dollar credit facility," Thain said.

"I'm not interested in a 9.9-per-cent stake," Lewis said.

"Well, I didn't come here to sell the company," Thain replied.

"That's what I'm interested in," Lewis said.

Lewis pointed out that Bank of America, despite its size, wasn't much of a force on Wall Street. In Merrill, the company would get a global presence in investment banking, the best brand name in wealth management, and Merrill's vaunted army of retail brokers. Thain, among others on Wall Street, felt that Lewis and other Bank of America executives in the South had a chip on their shoulders, imagining that they were never accorded the deference shown a JPMorgan Chase or a Citigroup.

Thain suggested that they assemble teams to pursue both options—the 9.9-per-cent stake and the takeover.

Lewis replied that maybe they shouldn't tell anyone else about a potential deal.

"I've got to tell Hank Paulson," Thain said. He was worried that he would be blamed for deflecting Bank of America's interest away from Lehman.

"We're not going to pursue Lehman Brothers," Lewis said. "But go ahead, you can tell Paulson."

When Thain got to the Fed, he found Paulson and told him that he'd met with Lewis.

"Good," Paulson said.

In the conference room, the discussion grew tense as some pointed out that it wouldn't help to save Lehman if the crisis just spread to the next bank. As JPMorgan's Jamie Dimon and Morgan Stanley's John Mack put it, a "fire wall" was needed to stop the fire's spread, and that fire wall would have to be Merrill Lynch. As the gathering broke up, Mack pulled Thain aside and proposed that they meet that evening. At about the same time, Gary Cohn, Goldman's president, told Peter Kraus that Goldman might be interested in buying a stake in Merrill. Kraus and Kelly agreed to go to Goldman's headquarters early the next day.

Paulson and Geithner had spoken on the phone that morning with a Barclays team, including the firm's president, Bob Diamond, at Barclays' New York headquarters. Barclays' C.E.O., John Varley, was on the line in London. As Paulson and Geithner listened at the New York Fed, their staff members gathered around.

The previous day, Paulson had talked with his British counterpart, Alistair Darling, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to make sure that British authorities were comfortable with Barclays' involvement in a potential Lehman rescue. Darling had pointed out that authority over a Barclays deal rested with Britain's Financial Services Authority and the Bank of England, and that British regulators would be asking tough questions about risks for the British taxpayer. Paulson turned to two of his Treasury aides, who were in his office during the conversation. "He doesn't want to import the American disease," Paulson said.

Now Diamond spoke for the British. Barclays was prepared to make an offer for Lehman, he said, with several conditions. The plan provided an elegant solution to Lehman's troubled assets: they would remain in a Lehman entity, which would be dubbed Newco and owned by Lehman's shareholders. Barclays would buy everything else. The proposal would leave a shortfall that Barclays estimated at $15 or $16 billion, for which funding would have to be found.

Barclays knew that on Monday morning someone would have to guarantee Lehman's debts until the deal closed, as JPMorgan had done for Bear Stearns. If someone did so, and investors had confidence in the guarantee, business would continue as usual. Otherwise, customers would flee. Although the sums at stake would be large, the risk was relatively low. British regulations required a shareholder vote to approve such a guarantee. Since Barclays would need to secure a guarantee for Lehman's operations for as long as a month before a deal could be closed, the Barclays people called Warren Buffett. Buffett was amenable, up to a point. "I could take a look at providing maybe five billion of protection," he said, but he wouldn't commit to more.

After the call, the Barclays bankers and advisers decided that it was pointless to pursue the matter. If the bank had to announce a piecemeal guarantee, in which Barclays honored three billion, Buffett five billion, and so on, investors wouldn't be reassured. No private entity would assume an unlimited exposure, no matter how slight the risk. Only a government could do that. Perhaps the Treasury or the Fed could simply say that it was backing Lehman's obligations until the deal closed, or until the shareholders approved. The Barclays bankers were convinced that such a guarantee wouldn't cost U.S. taxpayers anything.

As chance would have it, while the New York Fed was addressing its severest financial challenge since the Depression, the tenth-floor offices of the president were being cleared of asbestos and renovated. Geithner and his staff were working out of temporary quarters on the thirteenth floor that looked, as one visitor described them, like "a Toledo Ramada Inn." That morning, they met with the ubiquitous Christopher Flowers and senior officials from Bank of America, who were there to discuss the Lehman takeover. They had stayed up all night scrutinizing Lehman's books, and the picture had got worse. One Bank of America official told Paulson and Geithner, "We can't do this without you." He suggested that the government back about $60 billion of Lehman's troubled assets.

When Flowers was leaving, he turned to Paulson. "By the way," he said. "Have you been watching A.I.G.?"

"Why, what's wrong at A.I.G.?" Paulson asked. Geithner had mentioned that there were some liquidity issues, but Paulson had heard that the New York State insurance commissioner was stepping in, and that a private-sector solution was taking shape.

"Well, you should take a look at this," Flowers said, and pulled out the spreadsheet he'd got from A.I.G. the day before.

They went back into the office, and Paulson examined the numbers. Flowers pointed out the looming multibillion-dollar "shortfall."

"Oh, my God!" Paulson said.

He and Geithner asked their staff people to do some fast research on A.I.G., which, as a giant insurance company, wasn't regulated by either the Federal Reserve and the F.D.I.C. or the S.E.C. Although its insurance operations were covered by state insurance regulators, it turned out that A.I.G. did have some federal supervision. Since it owned a small savings-and-loan, its operations were reported to the Office of Thrift Supervision, which regulates S. & L.s. But, when Fed officials called the O.T.S., officials there seemed bewildered by the questions about A.I.G.'s liquidity. A.I.G. Financial Products, the center of the problems, was not regulated by the O.T.S., or by any American entity. Although the O.T.S. had warned A.I.G.'s board about inadequate risk oversight, no one in the government appears to have understood the potential scope of the problem. The Fed officials needed to talk to Robert Willumstad. "We'd better get them in here this afternoon," Paulson said.

When Willumstad and other A.I.G. officials arrived, Willumstad confirmed A.I.G.'s liquidity crisis. But he said that he was meeting with various private-equity firms. Despite the growing cash demands, A.I.G. still had enormous assets, including one of the world's largest investment portfolios. But many of these assets were in A.I.G.'s insurance businesses, which were required by the states to maintain assets sufficient to meet insurance claims. The New York insurance commissioner was at A.I.G.'s offices, and New York's governor was getting involved. The A.I.G. officials were optimistic about finding a way to free up some of those assets so that A.I.G. could meet the cash demands while it pursued other ways to raise capital.

Later that evening, Willumstad called the New York Fed. He knew that a Lehman bankruptcy was likely, and that it would significantly increase the pressure on A.I.G., with additional collateral calls and a probable decline in the value of its investment portfolio. Willumstad estimated that A.I.G. needed $40 billion, twice the amount he had mentioned earlier. To raise that kind of money, he needed government support. Geithner said that none would be forthcoming.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

I don't know how this happened.

When, at 8 A.M., John Thain returned to Ken Lewis's apartment to pursue the rescue of Merrill Lynch by Bank of America, he sensed that Lewis had grown more eager to make a deal. As Lewis offered Thain coffee, he seemed entranced by the possibility of instantly becoming America's largest retail broker. Thain was growing anxious. The previous night's meeting with John Mack and other Morgan Stanley executives had made it clear that Morgan Stanley couldn't move fast enough. He hadn't yet heard anything about the Goldman meeting then under way. Bank of America might be the only option. Lewis was emphatic about one thing. "We're only interested in buying a hundred per cent," he said.

"Then it can't be a lowball price," Thain replied.

Lewis assured him that he wasn't trying to get Merrill on the cheap.

After about half an hour, Thain left for the Fed. When he arrived, Kelly and Kraus told him that Goldman had proposed buying a 9.9-per-cent stake in Merrill and providing a $10-billion line of credit—just what Thain had been looking for originally. Goldman wanted to start examining Merrill's books as soon as possible. "Let's get this going," Thain said.

Kelly called Greg Fleming, who was in midtown negotiating with Bank of America, and asked him to send a team of Merrill bankers to the firm's headquarters, downtown, to help Goldman with its due diligence. Fleming balked. "That's not happening," he said. He'd got Bank of America to agree to $29 a share, a remarkably high price under the circumstances. "If they hear about a Goldman Sachs deal, they'll be spooked." Fleming refused to release any of his team. Shortly afterward, Thain called Fleming. The tone of their exchange was icy. "Get people down here," Thain ordered.

Fleming grudgingly agreed to send a couple of people, but there was less than twenty-four hours remaining before the markets opened, and Goldman, a traditional Merrill rival, was liable to walk away once its bankers got a good look at Merrill's balance sheet. A Bank of America deal could collapse as well. To some of those involved, $29 a share was beginning to seem wildly optimistic.

Paulson had been at his desk since seven, trying to organize the day's schedule and meeting with Treasury teams. At about eight, he took a call from John Varley, the Barclays chairman, in London.

Hector Sants, the chief executive of Britain's Financial Services Authority, felt that he had made it clear to Barclays that the F.S.A. would not approve a deal that put Barclays at risk, and Barclays had readily agreed. Although Barclays was well capitalized, and the F.S.A. thought it would weather the crisis, Sants did not believe that it was strong enough to absorb all the risk. He worried that doing so might trigger a crisis in confidence in Barclays that could become self-fulfilling. Barclays is one of Britain's largest retail banks, with millions of depositors. Sants expected something similar to the kind of backing that JPMorgan Chase had received in the Bear Stearns deal. It didn't matter to Sants whether it came from the bankers meeting in New York or from the Fed, and he urged Callum McCarthy, the chairman of the F.S.A., to make this clear to Geithner.

McCarthy tried to convey the British concerns to Geithner in a call on Sunday morning, mentioning the issues about Barclays' capital position. He also told Geithner that the F.S.A. lacked the authority to waive the shareholder vote required for Barclays to guarantee Lehman's operations. But perhaps McCarthy, in his understated British manner, was too elliptical. "Callum, you have to de-

Gahan Wilson

• •

cide," Geithner said. "Are you going to approve this or not? You're not saying no, you're not saying yes." He felt they were talking in circles.

One of the British participants said, "We could never get clarity" from the Americans.

When Geithner briefed Paulson and Christopher Cox on the exchange, Geithner was visibly angry. Why were the British raising this obstacle so late in the process? Geithner said that he had asked McCarthy three times if he was going to block the deal and never got a straight answer.

Cox called McCarthy and said, "Tell me what your view is." The normally affable McCarthy seemed cool and detached. "My responsibility is that you understand the things that have to be done," he said. "I don't see them happening."

Cox reported to Geithner and Paulson, "He won't budge."

Paulson placed another call to Alistair Darling, who had been in regular contact with Prime Minister Gordon Brown and McCarthy.

"Your F.S.A. is creating a lot of difficulties," Paulson said.

"You have to understand we have a responsibility to the British taxpayer," Darling replied.

The various calls between the Americans and the British that morning remain a point of contention. From the American point of view, there was never a solid proposal that they could respond to. The British (and some on the American side) maintain that the issue of a shareholder vote is a red herring. The British also felt that they were never presented with a deal that they could respond to. "It was not the high point of Anglo-American relations," one person familiar with the conversations says.

Lehman's C.E.O., Dick Fuld, had had months to find a buyer and hadn't done so. Now that Bank of America had set its sights on Merrill Lynch and Barclays was procedurally hung up, the only way to save Lehman would be for the government to essentially take an ownership stake—a step that would amount to nationalization and one for which the government says it did not have authority.

As the Treasury official described the situation, "The model had always been Bear Stearns. It was obvious you needed JPMorgan to make that happen. Now we didn't have a JPMorgan. So could we just recapitalize Lehman and keep it going? Do you leave Dick Fuld in place? How would that look? The run was already in progress. There was no reason to think our money would restore confidence in Lehman. As Geithner said, you can't lend into a run. So there were really two issues: legal and practical. Paulson insists that we didn't have the legal authority, and I won't question that. But, even if we did have the authority, it wasn't practical. All the Fed money in the world wasn't going to stop a run on Lehman."

Referring to a Lehman failure, the Treasury official said, "We knew it would be awful." At the same time, after months of turmoil, anyone still owning Lehman stock or commercial paper had to be considered a speculator. Perhaps investors would stop assuming that the government would bail out every wayward financial institution and adjust their risk-taking accordingly. "Everybody in some part of their brain thought it was a good thing for Lehman Brothers to go under," the Treasury official said. "Was this ten per cent of the brain? I don't know.... But the thought was there somewhere."

At noon, Steven Shafran, a senior adviser at the Treasury, text-messaged his colleagues, "We lost the patient."

When the chief executives of the banks met again that day at the New York Fed, they expected Geithner and Paulson to tell them exactly how much they would be expected to contribute to a Lehman rescue. Instead, Paulson, Geithner, and Cox all looked grim as they filed into the room, trailed by various Treasury and Fed staff members. "The Barclays deal has fallen through," Paulson said. "You should expect a Lehman bankruptcy."

Hastily summoned late that afternoon to the New York Fed, Harvey Miller, Lehman's head bankruptcy lawyer, joined a group of Lehman executives and officials from the Treasury, the Fed, and the S.E.C. Tom Baxter, the general counsel for the New York Fed, began by reiterating that the Barclays deal had fallen apart. There was no rescue for Lehman.

"What's the next step?" Miller asked.

The next step was bankruptcy. "You have to file by midnight," Baxter said.

Miller and his lawyers hadn't even started drafting papers. The day before, when he heard from Fed officials, he hadn't sensed any urgency.

"You don't realize what you're saying," Miller argued. "It's going to have a disabling effect on the markets and destroy confidence in the credit markets. If Lehman goes down, it will be Armageddon." All the government officials filed out, to discuss the timing of the bankruptcy, leaving the Lehman officials and lawyers to speculate about their fate. When they returned, Baxter told him that they had not changed their view. Lehman Brothers should file by midnight.

"Why?" Miller persisted. "There's no way that can happen. There's been no preparation." Raising his voice, he added, "We just want to understand."

An outside lawyer for the Fed told Miller that he wasn't being constructive by continuing to argue, and Baxter agreed. "The decision has been made and it won't be revisited," Baxter said.

Fed officials didn't feel that they had time to discuss the weekend's events in detail with Miller. Their goals were to make sure that Lehman officials and their lawyers understood that there would be no reprieve and that the company had to file for bankruptcy before the markets opened on Monday morning. "The alternative would have been chaos," Baxter said. "Everyone would have known that the weekend's rescue efforts had failed. You'd have had a mad dash for assets worldwide."

As Miller, the bankruptcy lawyers, and the Lehman officials returned to Lehman's headquarters, in midtown, a bearded man was pacing the sidewalk waving a placard that read "Down with Wall Street." Word had spread that in the event of bankruptcy the building would be locked down and its contents seized. Employees were streaming out, carrying suitcases, pulling rolling bags, carting off their personal belongings.

When the group reached the boardroom, on the thirty-first floor, the directors were already meeting. After a lawyer briefed the board on the government's verdict, Dick Fuld, the C.E.O., shook his head. "I don't know how this happened," he said. Another director asked plaintively, "They bailed out Bear—why not us?" Fuld's secretary came in and handed him a note. "Hold on," he said. "Something unusual is going on. Chris Cox wants to address the board."

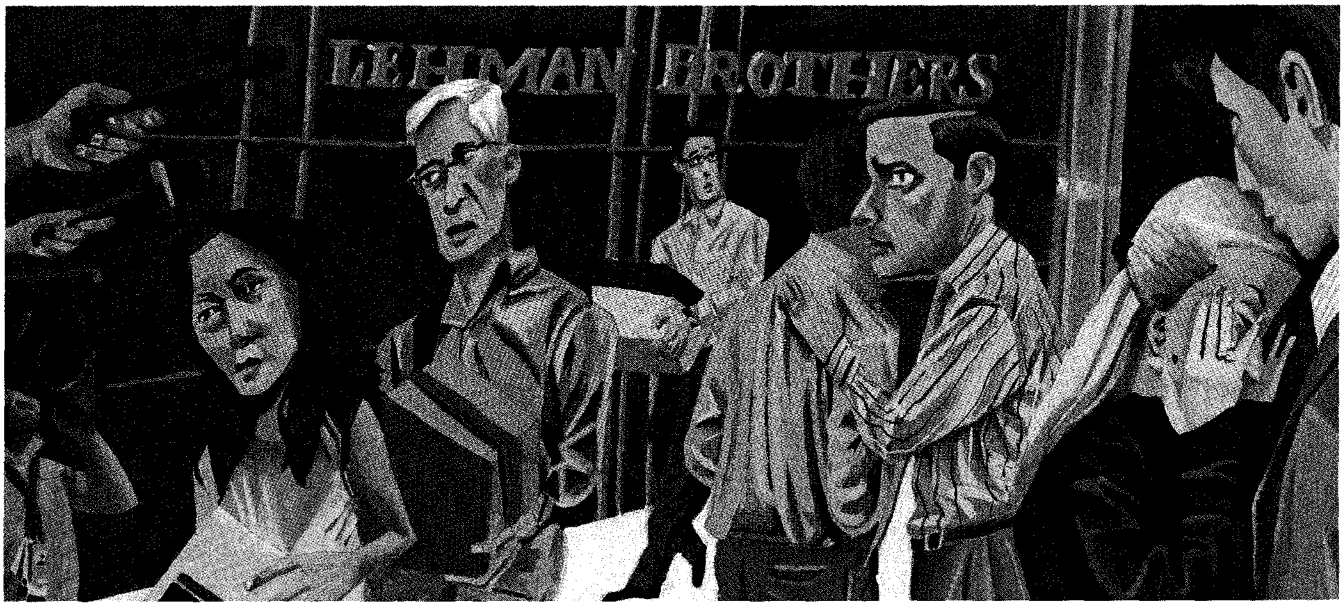
The S.E.C. chairman, along with Baxter and S.E.C., Fed, and Treasury staff people, was put through to the speaker at the center of the table. Paulson had put pressure on Cox to call the Lehman board and encourage Lehman to file for bankruptcy immediately. Cox felt that it was inappropriate for the government to interfere in the board's decision. Instead, he stressed that the Lehman board had a "grave responsibility," a fiduciary duty to shareholders. He told them that the Treasury and the Fed believed that market conditions were such that what they did would heavily affect the market, and the timing was critical.

"Are you directing us to put Lehman in bankruptcy?" one director asked. Cox said no. Then there was a pause as he conferred away from the phone. When he returned, a minute or two later, Cox said, "No, the ultimate decision is yours. We can't interfere in corporate governance."

Baxter added, "But our preference was made very clear today at the Fed."

After an hour of discussion, the board voted unanimously to file for bankruptcy.

Fuld said, "I guess this is goodbye."



As Lehman's bankruptcy was being negotiated, word spread that the headquarters would be locked down and its contents seized. Employees streamed out of the building, carting off their personal belongings.

A.I.G.'s efforts to raise capital or free assets from the regulated insurance companies stalled as the company kept increasing the estimate of the amount of capital it needed. Understandably, no one wanted to contribute $20 billion, only to discover that it had vanished as A.I.G.'s cash needs continued to soar. But, after more than two days of nearly round-the-clock due diligence, Flowers and his colleagues were ready to make a proposal to rescue A.I.G. Flowers had enlisted top officials from Allianz, the giant German insurance company, who had flown to New York the day before. At 3 P.M., they met with Willumstad in the conference room outside his office.

Flowers proposed that his firm and Allianz buy A.I.G. for $2 a share. (A.I.G. shares had closed on Friday at twelve.) They would acquire the assets of the subsidiaries, but would need to be insulated from the liabilities of the parent. Flowers and Allianz would contribute five billion each in new capital. Flowers's offer was conditioned on receiving Fed support.

And there was another condition: Willumstad and A.I.G.'s top management would be replaced immediately by Allianz executives.

Willumstad thought the proposal was laughable. He thanked Flowers for his efforts and asked him to leave.

That afternoon, Merrill Lynch worked out the details of the company's sale to Bank of America. It involved no cash but a share exchange that did indeed value Merrill at $29 a share. The Merrill Lynch board, meeting by phone, approved the deal. John Thain called Ken Lewis with the news. "It was unanimous," he said. "You have a deal."

Around 7:30 P.M., Thain and his entourage walked from Merrill, on Fifth Avenue, to the offices of Bank of America's legal firm, Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, on Fifty-second Street, where Lewis and other Bank of America executives were waiting. Bank of America's board had also unanimously approved the deal. The Merrill bankers got a taste of the different culture they would soon be joining. "It was South versus North, traditional banking–blue collar versus the trailblazers, the masters of the universe," one Merrill participant recalls. "I began to get a hint of the resentment toward Wall Street. This acquisition was tinged with resentment that went beyond the numbers. It was as if the tortoise had eaten the hare, and they were not very good at hiding it."

Flowers had just arrived from A.I.G. to deliver a fairness opinion on the $29 price for Bank of America shareholders. Given that it was a stock deal—Merrill shareholders would receive no cash—Bank of America also had some protection. If general market conditions deteriorated, and Bank of America's stock declined, the price of the Merrill deal would drop accordingly. Flowers concluded that $29 a share was a plausible price. (For this advice, which has subsequently been criticized, Flowers and an affiliated firm were paid $20 million by Bank of America.)

According to a complaint later filed by the S.E.C., the agreement also included a document, not made public at the time, that authorized bonuses to be paid to Merrill employees for 2008. Even though Merrill's results weren't yet known for the full year (ultimately, the firm lost more than $27 billion), the document allowed for bonuses that "do not exceed $5.8 billion in aggregate value." Bank of America now says that the document was not disclosed for "competitive reasons."

While lawyers continued working out the details, Thain and Lewis went to a small conference room to await news that they could sign the merger documents. A bottle of chilled champagne and two glasses had been placed in the room to toast the completion of the deal. Thain felt that he had done the best he could for Merrill's shareholders. As the time passed, Lewis grew impatient, and called several times to ask where the papers were. Finally, just before 1 A.M., they arrived. The two men signed, and then poured the champagne. Neither one said anything about Thain's future with Bank of America. "I look forward to a great partnership with Merrill Lynch," Lewis said, raising his glass. He grimaced. The champagne was warm.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

The beginnings of a run.

Bruce R. Bent, Sr., the chairman of the Reserve Management Company, which ran the country's oldest money-market fund, had just arrived in Rome, where he was planning to celebrate his fiftieth wedding anniversary, when his son, Bruce Bent II, the firm's vice-chairman, called him from New York. In his absence from the office, Bent relied on his son, whose shoulder-length hair and beard made him look more like the philosophy major and drummer he once was than like an executive of a renowned money-market fund. The subject they discussed was the Lehman bankruptcy. The Bents' money-market fund owned hundreds of millions of dollars of Lehman debt securities.

The elder Bent, along with the firm's late co-founder, Henry Brown, had invented the money-market fund, in 1970, and the company's Primary Fund had begun operating in 1971. At that time, yields on bank deposits were capped at about five per cent, but short-term U.S. Treasury bonds, which could be acquired only in ten-thousand-dollar increments, were yielding eight per cent. Now, thanks to Bent and Brown, even small investors could participate in the higher yields of Treasury bonds by pooling assets. The investments were ultra-safe, and since they had short-term maturities there was little risk from changing interest rates.

In addition to U.S. Treasuries, some money-market funds began buying commercial paper—short-term debt that companies use to fund their operating expenses. By September of 2008, money-market funds had become a $3.5-trillion market, and many large corporations had come to rely on them to meet their day-to-day cash needs, such as making payroll. Unlike bank deposits, the funds weren't covered by federal deposit insurance, but they were perceived as equally safe. And why not? In forty years, the net asset value of funds available to the public had never fallen below a dollar a share—a hypothetical possibility known as "breaking the buck." Many funds carried check-writing privileges, helped to finance the federal debt, and provided large corporations with an important source of liquidity.

For years, the elder Bent had insisted that money-market funds should confine themselves to Treasury bills and bank certificates of deposit, but in 2006, as other firms made huge profits, the Primary Fund began buying highly rated commercial paper as well. From November, 2007, through the summer of 2008, it increased its purchases of Lehman securities. Thanks in part to the higher yields from such assets, the Primary Fund's one-year return was four per cent—well above the comparable rate for Treasuries, and high even by money-market-fund standards. Both Moody's and Standard & Poor's gave triple-A ratings to the Primary Fund. Individual and large institutional investors flocked to the firm, and its assets rose to nearly $63 billion. About 1.2 per cent of those were in Lehman commercial paper and other securities—enough, theoretically, to break the buck if the assets lost their value.

Even as Lehman's situation deteriorated, the elder Bent had remained confident that the assets were secure. Two days before leaving for his vacation, he had declared on CNBC that, because of Lehman's importance to the world financial structure, "the Federal Reserve window that they opened after they closed down Bear Stearns should be available to Lehman for the same type of situation."

It was now publicly known that the Primary Fund was exposed to Lehman's failure. Time Warner, which had $820 million in the fund, requested redemptions that morning. The Bents contacted the New York Fed at 7:50 A.M., according to S.E.C. documents, to express concern about Lehman's effect on the money-market industry and on the Primary Fund.

But the gravity of the crisis apparently had yet to sink in, judging from the transcript of the Reserve Management board meeting at 8 A.M., which was released by the S.E.C. Bent II suggested that his father preside: "You got more sleep than I did last night."

"Last night, I was sleeping on the plane from New York to Rome," his father said. "I said to my wife, 'This is supposed to be a memorable trip.' And she responded, 'Well, it certainly will be, right?' "

Bent II reported that, as of that morning, the Primary Fund was facing $5.2 billion in redemption requests. In assessing the value of the Lehman holdings, the elder Bent initially argued that they continue to carry the Lehman debt at par, or a hundred per cent of face value, even though, according to the S.E.C., the market data the Bents had seen suggested that there was no real market for Lehman debt and that bids ranged from forty-five to fifty cents. At a second meeting, the board settled on eighty cents on the dollar, enabling the fund to calculate a net asset value of 99.75 cents, which could be rounded to maintain the one-dollar net asset value. At the same time, the board decided not to try to sell the securities under current market conditions.

At a third board meeting, at 1 P.M., Bent II reported that redemption requests had reached $16.5 billion. According to the minutes, he described "what appeared to be a run on the Primary Fund." But he didn't mention that State Street, the fund's custodian bank, had called to report that the huge number of redemptions had caused the Primary Fund's account to be overdrawn, and the bank was suspending overdraft privileges, according to the S.E.C. Anyone seeking to withdraw funds could not immediately get his money. The credit markets were barely functioning, and the fund couldn't raise cash to meet redemption requests by selling its normally liquid assets. As the chief investment officer put it, according to the transcript of the board meetings, this was "the kiss of death." He also said, "Paulson and Bernanke totally fucked this up. . . . I don't think they thought this God-damned thing through, to figure out what the ripple effects would be."

Bent II said that the company would try to secure additional financing or inject capital from the holding company, Reserve Management. The board voted to pursue that strategy, and sales representatives launched an effort to stem the withdrawals and reassure shareholders. One told a client, according to S.E.C. documents, "We have a backstop and are going to ensure that the fund does not break the buck."

Yet by the end of the day redemption requests totalled more than $20 billion. A little less than half that had been funded, with Reserve Management personnel blaming the delays on the market and limits placed by State Street. As the chief investment officer summed up the situation in a call to other Reserve officials, "It's just fucking horrific. . . . I'm thinking, We're going to get through this, we're going to get through this, we're going to get through this. But, you know, I haven't seen the market like this in thirty years. This is, like, Depression."

Nevertheless, after the market closed Reserve Management reported that it would be able to maintain a net asset value of one dollar.

Whatever officials at the Reserve Management Company thought of Paulson, when he returned to Washington he was greeted with overwhelming praise for having let Lehman fail. Calls to his office, he says, some from members of Congress, were running ten to one in favor of the decision. "The government had to draw a line somewhere," the *Wall Street Journal* wrote in an editorial. "Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson's refusal to blink won't get any second guessing from us."

After reporting to President Bush, Paulson met with reporters in the White House briefing room. "As you know, we're working through a difficult period in our financial markets right now as we work off some of the past excesses," he said. "But the American people can remain confident in the soundness and the resilience of our financial system."

Still, even as Paulson was speaking, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was dropping. By the end of the day, it was down five hundred and four points, or 4.4 per cent—the biggest one-day percentage drop since the first day of trading after September 11, 2001. Traders, aware of A.I.G.'s mounting collateral calls and the ongoing meetings at the New York Fed, were unloading positions. A.I.G. shares dropped sixty-one per cent.

The last remaining independent investment banks on Wall Street were hit hard, too. Morgan Stanley shares dropped fourteen per cent, and Goldman's twelve per cent.

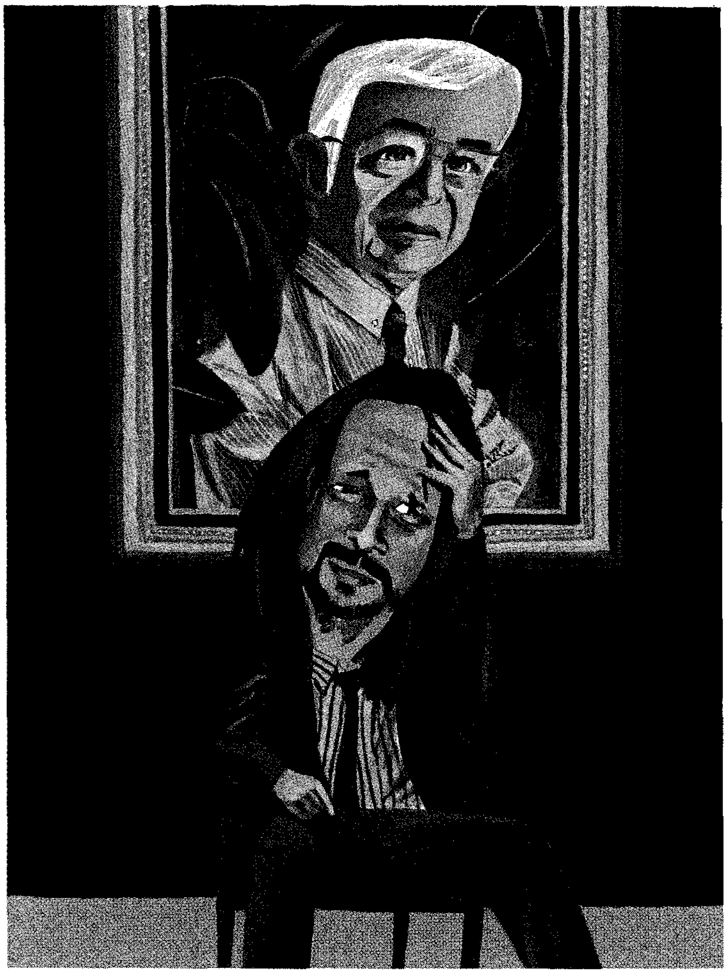
At 11 A.M., for the fourth consecutive day, investment bankers filed into the New York Fed. "I don't think I can take another day of this," a Goldman banker told Lloyd Blankfein as they got out of the Goldman car.

"You're getting out of a Mercedes to go to the New York Federal Reserve," Blankfein responded. "You're not getting out of a Higgins boat on Omaha Beach."

The subject of today's meeting was A.I.G., where cash was vanishing at an alarming rate. "There will be no public support" for A.I.G., Geithner announced. He asked the bankers to explore an industry solution. Earlier, he had called Robert Willumstad and said that he wanted him to appoint JPMorgan Chase, already working for A.I.G., and Goldman Sachs to organize a syndicate of banks to reach a solution.

By now, all of A.I.G.'s possible rescuers had vanished. A person who spoke with potential buyers says, "They went from keenly interested to not wanting to touch it at any price." By 5 P.M., the syndicate efforts had collapsed. Geithner had a Fed team working on A.I.G., and at midnight he convened the team, some of whose members were participating by phone from Washington. "Can we let it go?" he asked.

A.I.G. Financial Products, the primary source of the company's current troubles, had a $500-billion credit-swaps portfolio that fell outside the regulatory purview of the Fed, the Treasury, and the S.E.C. The company's failure to honor those contracts and make the payments would render numerous banks and other financial institutions unstable as they wrote down the value of suddenly uninsured and unhedged positions. This could precipitate a crisis of depositor confidence and a global bank run with "potentially catastrophic unforeseen consequences," as A.I.G. officials later put it in a presentation to the Fed. A.I.G. did business in more than a hundred and thirty countries, and had a hundred and sixteen thousand employees and seventy-four million customers, including thirty million in the U.S.



Lehman's failure was "the kiss of death" for America's oldest money-market fund, run by Bruce R. Bent, Sr., and his son Bruce Bent II.

As the discussion continued, a consensus emerged that A.I.G. was indeed too big, or at least too deeply enmeshed in the global financial system, to fail. At 2 A.M., Geithner urged everyone to get some sleep.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Do you have $85 billion?

That morning, Willumstad called Geithner again. He said that he was planning to draw down the last of A.I.G.'s credit lines that morning. Traders and investors would recognize such a step as desperation, making bankruptcy all but inevitable.

"Don't do that," Geithner said.

"Why not?" Willumstad asked. "Unless you can tell me there's a solution in place, I have an obligation to shareholders."

"Don't do it. I'll get back to you." Geithner hung up.

An hour passed. Hearing nothing, Willumstad gave the order to draw down the credit lines. Then, at eleven-thirty, Geithner called and told him that an emergency meeting was under way at the Fed in Washington about a potential solution. Willumstad hastily rescinded the order.

It was becoming clear to Geithner and Bernanke that government action was the only recourse. Every financial institution was struggling to value assets at a time when there were fewer buyers for them at any price. Financial institutions were growing reluctant to lend to one another, even overnight. That day, the Fed put $70 billion into credit markets, but with little evident effect. European central bankers were also grappling with the rapid deterioration of credit markets and were deeply concerned about the impact of an A.I.G. failure on European financial institutions and markets. Several European central bankers had spoken with Bernanke, urging the Fed to do whatever it could to prevent an A.I.G. failure.

Several Fed staff members, including the vice-chairman, Donald Kohn, and the governors Kevin Warsh, Randall Kroszner, and Elizabeth Duke, assembled in Bernanke's office. Geithner and Paulson, participating by phone, reported on A.I.G.'s imminent failure and the systemic risks that that would entail. There were no buyers, no lenders.

Letting A.I.G. collapse could be disastrous. "A.I.G. was even larger than Lehman, with a substantial presence in derivatives and debt markets, as well as in insurance markets," Bernanke later recalled. "Given the extent of the exposures of major banks around the world to A.I.G., and in light of the extreme fragility of the system, there was a significant risk that A.I.G.'s failure could have sparked a global banking panic. If that had happened, it was not at all clear that we would have been able to stop the bleeding, given the resources and authorities we had available at that time."

Geithner and Paulson proposed extending an $85-billion loan that would be collateralized by all of A.I.G.'s assets. A.I.G. did have several large, profitable businesses, including its main insurance arm, which gave the Fed a legal basis for making the loan. The government would also demand a nearly eighty-per-cent equity stake in A.I.G. and would have the right to veto any dividend payments.

"There was great reluctance," one participant recalls. "People were uncomfortable. We'd just crossed another boundary. A.I.G. wasn't a bank or a broker dealer but an insurance company. Could we have let it go? No one had any idea what would happen if we let a company this size fail. There was no precedent. We were aware that lots of banks and investment banks were counterparties and might be at risk, but we didn't do this to save Goldman, or SocGen, or Deutsche Bank. It was far more complex. We were worried about the households with 401(k) plans, life-insurance policies, and pensions."

The discussion lasted thirty minutes. There was no real basis for knowing whether A.I.G.'s healthy businesses were sufficient collateral. Still, Bernanke said recently, "Lehman was insolvent and didn't have the collateral to secure the amount of Federal Reserve lending that would have been necessary to prevent its collapse. In contrast, A.I.G. Financial Products was just one division of a big, global insurance company." But some Treasury and Fed participants recognized that giving A.I.G. an $85-billion loan so soon after Lehman's collapse would appear wildly inconsistent. "Opposite decisions were made for apparently similar reasons," the Treasury official says. "It was hard to justify. But A.I.G. was another order of magnitude. It was a quantum shift. It was so beyond anything we'd ever envisioned."

That afternoon, President Bush, accompanied by Josh Bolten and Joel Kaplan, his chief of staff and deputy chief of staff, and by Keith Hennessey, the director of the National Economic Council, sat down with Paulson and Bernanke in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. "So what is going on in our financial system, and what are we going to do?" Bush asked.

Paulson regularly delivered updates to the White House, but from the outset of his tenure as Treasury Secretary he had been making policy to an extraordinary degree. Bush saw himself as a wartime President, and he was deeply involved in defense issues. The economy was secondary. One person who worked with Bush for many years said, "My sense is, this came up in the final months of an eight-year term. He was so ground down by Katrina, the war in Iraq. He was just out of gas." A government official added, "Hank Paulson and the Treasury were unilaterally making economic policy for the Administration. There was no influence from the White House."

"A.I.G. is about to fail," Paulson told Bush, warning that a potential collapse was likely to be catastrophic, especially with markets still highly unstable after the Lehman failure. Bernanke explained A.I.G.'s credit-default swaps and the likely consequences that A.I.G.'s failure would have on major U.S. and European banks. He also described the limits on the Fed's powers to deal with an institution like A.I.G.

Bush accepted Paulson and Bernanke's arguments about the necessity of government action to save A.I.G., but he couldn't help wondering, "How have we come to the point where we can't let an institution fail without affecting the whole economy?"

"How have we come to the point where we can't let an institution fail without affecting the whole economy?" Bush wondered aloud.

Bernanke reiterated that what had begun as a subprime-mortgage problem in the U.S. was emerging as a global crisis, which made it even harder for the Fed to combat the problems on its own.

When Bernanke and Paulson finished, Bush said, "Sometimes you have to make the tough decisions. If you think this has to be done, you have my blessing." But, as he rose to leave, he said, "Someday you guys are going to need to tell me how we ended up with a system like this. I know this is not the time to test them and put them through failure, but we're not doing something right if we're stuck with these miserable choices."

Despite efforts to calm shareholders in the Primary Fund, Bruce Bent II reported to the board that morning that redemption requests as of 9 A.M. stood at $24.6 billion. He also told the board that Reserve Management had not arranged any credit facility or injected any capital to maintain the one-dollar net asset value. And State Street had refused to extend additional overdraft privileges to the fund. The parent company, Reserve, did not have adequate capital to buy the Lehman assets at par. The Bents were unable to inject any of their own personal funds, contrary to representations they had made the previous day.

At 3:45 P.M., Bent II told the board that he had called the New York Fed for assistance in meeting shareholder redemptions but had been turned down, and that total redemption requests were now approximately $40 billion. With no buyers for the fund's Lehman securities, the board had no choice but to vote to reduce their value to zero. For the first time in forty years, the buck was officially broken. The company issued a terse press release:

> The value of the debt securities issued by Lehman Brothers Holdings, Inc. (face value

$785 million), and held by the Primary Fund has been valued at zero effective as of 4:00 P.M. New York time today. As a result, the NAV of the Primary Fund, effective as of 4:00 P.M., is $0.97 a share.

Of the many possible consequences of a Lehman failure, no one seems to have thought about the collapse of a money-market fund; it was a development that was "unanticipated," a Fed official said. (The S.E.C. eventually charged the Bents and the Reserve Management Company with civil fraud for allegedly making false and misleading statements about the fund's financial state. The Bents countered that they didn't profit themselves and were simply trying to "save the fund" and protect investors. They moved to dismiss the suit, which is pending.)

Late in the afternoon, Willumstad and other A.I.G. executives and their lawyers and advisers gathered in a conference room outside Willumstad's office to examine the terms of the proposed loan that had just arrived from the Fed. After reading them, Richard Beattie, a partner at the law firm Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, representing A.I.G.'s board, turned to Willumstad. "You're now working for the federal government," he said. "They own you now."

The terms gave the government a 79.9-per-cent stake and saddled A.I.G. with an onerous interest rate of 11.5 per cent.

Willumstad's assistant interrupted to say that the Secretary of the Treasury and the president of the New York Fed were on the line. Willumstad and Beattie stepped outside to take the call.

"This is the only offer," Geithner said. "There is no negotiation."

Paulson jumped in: "There is one more condition. Bob, you're going to be replaced."

After Willumstad hung up, he returned to the conference room. "Dick was wrong," he said. "I'm not working for the federal government."

At 6 P.M., most of the House and Senate leadership, summoned on short notice, gathered in Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's conference room for a briefing by Paulson and Bernanke. Paulson announced that the Fed had decided to loan A.I.G. $85 billion and essentially seize control of the company under the Fed's emergency powers. Bernanke pointed out that A.I.G. stock was one of the ten most widely held in 401(k) retirement accounts.

Reid put his face in his hands. "I hope you understand this does not constitute formal approval by Congress to take action," he said.

"Do you have eighty-five billion?" Representative Barney Frank asked.

"I have eight hundred billion," Bernanke said, referring to the Fed's balance sheet.

Senator Christopher Dodd twice asked how the Fed had the authority to lend to, and take control of, an insurance company. Bernanke argued that the Fed had emergency powers to aid any company as long as there was a "systemic risk," and gave a brief tutorial on a little-known section of the Fed's authorizing statute.

Bernanke said that even this step might not be enough. Legislation authorizing additional aid probably would be needed as well.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

We need to get ahead of this.

Asian and European stock markets had dropped sharply, and trading was halted in Russia. News that the Primary Fund had broken the buck had called into question the safety and viability of the global money-market industry. The rescue of A.I.G. gave the U.S. government not only 79.9 per cent of A.I.G.'s equity but also priority over A.I.G.'s bondholders, who wouldn't be paid until the government was reimbursed. A number of money-market funds owned securities issued by A.I.G.

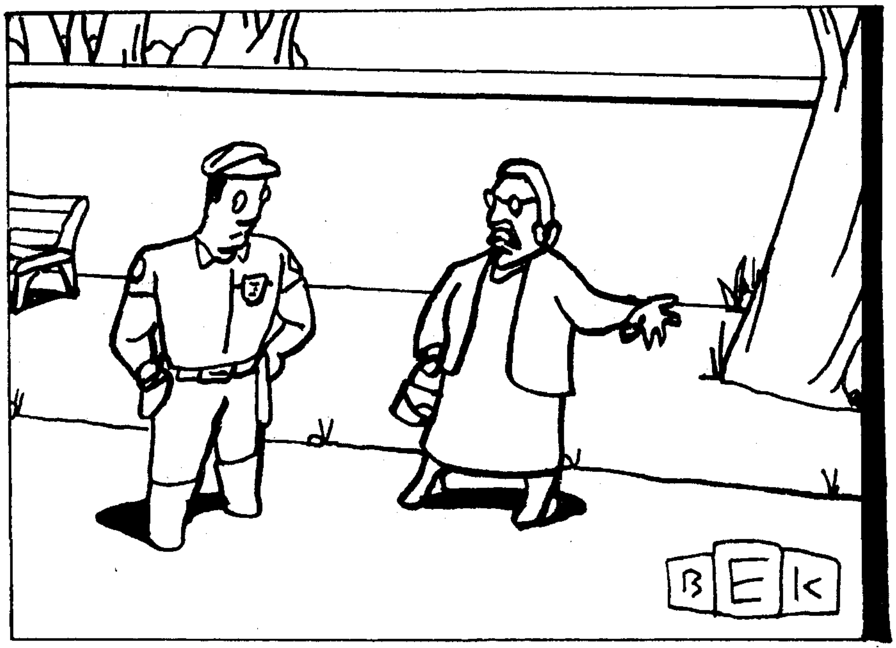
Already, money-market redemption requests were surging; on Tuesday alone, they had been $33.8 billion, compared with a total of $4.9 billion for the entire previous week. Large money-market funds, including Fidelity, Vanguard, and Dreyfus, rushed to issue statements reassuring investors that their holdings were safe and would retain their one-dollar-per-share value, but that didn't seem to stem the tide. Even more worrisome, funds that had no exposure to troubled securities were confronting huge redemptions. Putnam announced that it would close and liquidate the $12.3-billion Institutional Prime Money Market Fund, even though the fund owned no Lehman or A.I.G. securities and maintained its one-dollar share value. (Shareholders didn't lose any money.)

In the face of mounting redemptions, money-market funds raced to sell whatever they could find buyers for, but there were no buyers for all but the safest, shortest-term securities. Early that morning, Paulson had a disturbing phone conversation with Jeffrey Immelt, the chief executive of General Electric. Immelt reported that the capital markets were "very bad," and Paulson said he understood that the commercial-paper markets were under stress. "That's bad for GE," Immelt replied. Like most large corporations, GE uses the commercial-paper market to fund its day-to-day operations, including those of GE Capital, its huge finance arm. GE was worried about its ability to roll over its short-term debt, and the previous day had paid 3.5 per cent, much higher than normal, for an overnight loan. (The lower-rated Ford Motor Credit reportedly had to pay 7.5 per cent.) For companies like GE, the uncertainty was as debilitating as the high rates.

The Treasury official described the situation: "Lehman Brothers begat the Reserve collapse, which begat the money-market run, so the money-market funds wouldn't buy commercial paper. The commercial-paper market was on the brink of destruction. At this point, the banking system stops functioning. You're pulling four trillion out of the private sector"—money-market funds—"and giving it to the government in the form of T-bills. That was commercial paper funding GE, Citigroup, FedEx, all the commercial-paper issuers. This was systemic risk. Suddenly, you have a global bank holiday."

Horrific as GE's situation threatened to become, Paulson had more immediate problems. Overnight, the cost of buying default protection against Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs had soared. Short sellers began targeting Morgan Stanley's stock, which infuriated John Mack, who called on the S.E.C. to restrict such speculation. There was the danger of a collapse in confidence in both Goldman and Morgan Stanley, as had happened with Lehman.

After Lehman's bankruptcy, regulators froze the assets of Lehman Brothers in Europe, which included many hedge funds. "I got panicked phone calls from hedge funds," the Treasury official says. "They couldn't get their securities. That was not supposed to be the deal. So people started running on Morgan Stanley and Gold-



"Officer, everything in the world is bothering me."

• •

man Sachs. The fire line broke down."

Paulson obtained from a Treasury lawyer a waiver of conflict-of-interest restrictions on conversations about government assistance for Goldman. The lawyer ruled that "the magnitude of the government's interest" outweighed any ethics concerns. Over the next few days, the *Times* has reported, Paulson's calendar indicates that he spoke to Lloyd Blankfein, Goldman's C.E.O., more than twenty times and to Morgan Stanley's John Mack a dozen times.

Paulson's office, which overlooked the White House, was jammed with Treasury officials for an emergency meeting at 8 A.M. Bernanke, Kevin Warsh, and other Fed staff members were on the phone, as was Geithner, along with his staff, in New York. Paulson had been up most of the night watching overseas markets.

"We're at the precipice," Paulson told the group. "Nothing is breaking our way. We can't solve the problems of today; we need to think of tomorrow. We need to get ahead of this. It's deepening, moving too quickly. This is the financial equivalent of war, and we're going to need wartime powers." Bernanke and Geithner agreed. Paulson divided the group into teams. "The government needs money, and it needs authority," Paulson said. "If you had a blank sheet of paper, tell me what you need."

That day, as investors rushed to the safety of short-term U.S. Treasury bonds, yields on three-month Treasury notes dipped below zero. "We watched the market for T-bills very closely," Donald Kohn, the Fed's vice-chairman, recalls. "You knew there was complete panic, and it was spreading."

At the White House, calls were pouring in from throughout the financial world. "Even strangers were cold-calling me," Keith Hennessey recalls. "They were all saying, 'We see the beginnings of a run—a run on the financial system.' The money funds were experiencing a run. People were literally pulling their money out and putting it in a mattress. Treasury rates went negative! People were locking in a loss just to protect their money."

Geithner said, "It's hard to describe how bad it was and how bad it felt." He got a call from a "titan of the financial system," who said he was worried but he was doing fine. His voice was quavering. After hanging up, Geithner immediately called the man back. "Don't call anyone else," Geithner said. "If anyone hears your voice, you'll scare the shit out of them."

The day's turmoil was reflected in the U.S. markets. The Dow Jones average dropped four hundred and forty-nine points; it had fallen seven per cent in just three days of trading and was twenty-three per cent below its level the previous year, which made it a bear market. Morgan Stanley shares fell twenty-four per cent and Goldman Sachs dropped nearly fourteen per cent; CNBC began running Morgan Stanley and Goldman stock quotes at the top of the screen, in what some called a "death watch." Washington Mutual dropped thirteen per cent, and Wachovia fell twenty-one per cent.

"It was chaotic," Blankfein recalls of the rumors about Goldman's survival. "There were people taking deep breaths, including me from time to time." He worried that a collapse in confidence, even if unjustified, would become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

At Morgan Stanley, it was worse. "The hedge funds panicked," a Morgan Stanley executive recalls, and by Wednesday things had reached a fever pitch. "Everyone said the investment-banking model was dead." Longtime friends and clients of John Mack called him to say that they were sorry but they had to withdraw their Morgan Stanley funds. "Do what you have to do," he told them.

That afternoon, Mack issued a memo to his employees: "It's very clear to me—we're in the midst of a market controlled by fear and rumors, and short sellers are driving our stock down." Geithner and Paulson told Mack that he had to follow the lead of Merrill Lynch and find a partner. Since the collapse of Bear Stearns, in March, Geithner had periodically suggested that the remaining investment banks become bank holding companies, gaining access to the Fed's discount window and other credit facilities in return for accepting regulation by the Fed. Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs had talked about it to their boards, but nothing had happened. A faster way to the same end would be for the investment banks to merge with a commercial bank. Although the big commercial banks, with their large depositor bases, were still viewed as reliable sources of liquidity, Mack considered their balance sheets to be more precarious than his own. And, indeed, Wachovia had to be saved in a matter of weeks, and Citigroup eventually had to be rescued.

Still, Mack did speak to Vikram Pandit, of Citigroup, about a possible merger, but they jointly concluded that it made no sense. Geithner suggested that Goldman's Blankfein call Pandit. Blankfein made the call, thinking that he was supposed to rescue Citi. He was dumbfounded when he discovered that Pandit wasn't expecting to hear from him. For his part, Pandit was taken aback that Goldman thought it might be able to buy Citi, since at the time Pandit felt that Citi was much stronger.

That afternoon, Mack, speaking to Blankfein, bemoaned the effect of short sellers, whose actions were unnerving investors. The previous weekend, at the Fed, Mack had complained about the impact of short sellers on Lehman, and asked Blankfein if he would support an effort to get the S.E.C. to ban short selling. Blankfein had demurred. But now he said, "We've rethought the need for a temporary ban." They agreed to press the issue with Paulson and Geithner.

At six that evening, Bernanke met with his top aides—Donald Kohn; Kevin Warsh; Scott G. Alvarez, the general counsel; and Michelle Smith, the spokesperson—with Paulson and Geithner participating by speakerphone. "We cannot do this alone anymore," he said. "We have to go to Congress and get some authority."

Paulson hadn't yet taken any concrete steps to enlist legislators to authorize a government rescue. Paulson reiterated his concern about getting congressional leaders to go along. "I spoke to Harry and Nancy"—Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi, the House Speaker—"and the political advisers," he said. "If the Treasury and the Fed say it's an emergency and we need help, and help doesn't come, it would further destabilize the markets. You don't go public until you're reasonably certain you'll get what you're asking for."

Bernanke was growing agitated. "Hank! Listen to me," he interrupted. "We are done!"

It was the first time Fed officials had heard him raise his voice.

"The Fed is already doing all that it can with the powers we have," Bernanke continued. One participant recalled, "Ben gave an impassioned, linear, rigorous argument explaining the limits of our authority and the history of financial crises in the U.S. and abroad." That history showed that efforts to resolve such crises "are successful only when overwhelming force from all parts of government is brought to bear," the participant said. "It was an encyclopedic tour de force."

It was as though Bernanke were the professor and Paulson the student. Bernanke's comments lasted about fifteen minutes, and Paulson was uncharacteristically silent until near the end.

"Got to go," he said, and hung up.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

You can sort it out later!

The Fed group reconvened at six-thirty that morning. They had decided the night before that repetition would be helpful, so Bernanke started on the same lecture. Thirty seconds into it, Paulson interrupted. "Ben, Ben, Ben . . ." Bernanke stopped talking. "I've done some thinking," Paulson said. "You and I should go see the President and then go to Congress tonight and ask for more authority."

At 10:15 A.M., President Bush delivered a two-minute televised statement outside the Oval Office, his first public pronouncement since the crisis began, which concluded:

> Our financial markets continue to deal with serious challenges. As our recent actions demonstrate, my Administration is focussed on meeting these challenges. The American people can be sure we will continue to act to strengthen and stabilize our financial markets and improve investor confidence.

When staffers again huddled in Paulson's office, Paulson wanted to know what ideas they had come up with. Asian and European markets were continuing to plunge, with banks and insurers bearing the brunt of the losses. Britain announced a monthlong ban on short selling in an effort to prevent the kind of "bear raids" that some blamed for the fall in Lehman's stock. Russia had suspended trading for the previous two days. Morgan Stanley shares had plunged twenty-four per cent the previous day.

Paulson had just heard that Bank of America was temporarily pulling back on credit lines to some McDonald's franchisees, slowing a McDonald's expansion into upscale coffee drinks to compete with Starbucks. (Bank of America disputes this account, but McDonald's did issue a memo urging franchisees to find other sources of credit, according to Bloomberg.)

Dan Jester, a Goldman vice-president whom Paulson had brought to the Trea-

"There's something you haven't told me."

sury Department that summer, reported that one approach would be for the government to inject capital directly into financial institutions. The standard way to raise capital is to sell stock. There were now no private buyers. But, as one participant put it, was the government going "to A.I.G. them"? If the government bought common stock, it would have the power to vote, appoint management and the board of directors, and, if the stake was big enough, control the company. Might this end up being "nationalization"? The politics looked awful. Even so, Jester and most of his team argued that the approach was simple, efficient, and effective, and would protect taxpayers.

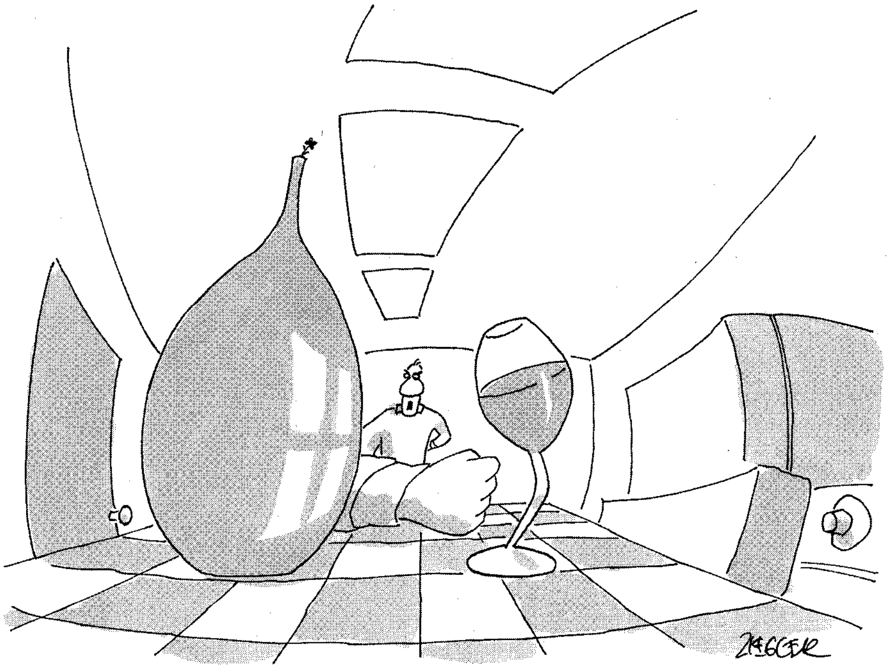
Bernanke had long been saying that the government needed many tools to respond to the unforeseeable, including the ability to buy "bad companies" as well as "bad assets." But Paulson told Bernanke he feared that direct investments would destabilize markets and drive out private investors.

Another option was to remove the bad assets from balance sheets. The Resolution Trust Corporation, created by Congress in 1989, had used taxpayer money to buy and then auction off distressed real estate from failing savings-and-loans. Though some people criticized the agency for dumping assets on the market too quickly and selling at fire-sale prices, the approach established a floor for real-estate prices. This approach not only had worked in the past but would avoid the charged issue of government ownership.

Several people, however, noted that there were major differences between tangible real estate and the esoteric mortgage-backed securities and other structured assets now on balance sheets. Houses and land could be auctioned and find buyers, as they have been for centuries. But, without any functioning market for mortgage-backed debt, how would you value it and what would the government pay? If the amount was too small, bank balance sheets would be devastated by the sales and subsequent write-downs, making the crisis worse. If too big, it was simply a transfer of wealth from taxpayers to banks and other financial institutions. Neel Kashkari, an assistant Treasury secretary and an ex-Goldman investment banker, who was the biggest proponent of removing bad assets from balance sheets, argued that the mechanics could always be worked out once Congress had given the Treasury and the Fed the authority to act.

Steven Shafran and others who had focussed on liquidity issues proposed allowing money-market funds to borrow from the Fed, using their commercial paper and other assets as collateral. But Paulson thought that this was too technical for the average money-market-fund investor and wouldn't be enough to stop a run. "What would you do if you want to address all the issues?"

"We could always just guarantee the money-market funds," Shafran said.



"Damn it, honey, I hate it when you give me that fish-eye look."

Paulson looked up. "Could we?"

"I think so," Shafran said.

Paulson slammed his hand down on his desk. "Then that's what we're going to do."

A few participants were aghast. The risks seemed enormous: it was a four-trillion-dollar guarantee! Even the F.D.I.C. insured bank accounts only up to a hundred thousand dollars. Moreover, money-market funds weren't bank deposits but investment products with higher risks and therefore higher returns. By eliminating that risk, another cornerstone of moral hazard was being removed.

But others argued that the risk of not doing anything, or of doing too little, was far worse. Paulson embraced the boldness and simplicity of the notion. As someone said, it "passed the *USA Today* test."

Paulson and Bernanke returned to the Roosevelt Room, joined this time by Chris Cox, of the S.E.C. Vice-President Dick Cheney was also there, along with Bush.

Paulson outlined the decision of the Treasury, backed by the Fed, to seek legislation authorizing the purchase of billions of dollars in troubled mortgage-backed assets. "It would be wise to go to Congress," Bernanke said, arguing that capital should be approved by Congress and dispensed by the appropriate authority, the Treasury, rather than by the Fed, an institution already doing all it could with the powers it had.

"You're the experts, and I'll support you," Bush said.

Paulson launched into a discussion of the political issues, and the need to win over conservative Republicans as well as the Democratic leadership.

The President interrupted. "Hank, let me worry about the politics. You do what is right."

As word spread that a more comprehensive approach to the crisis might be under way, stocks soared in near-frenzied trading. The Dow closed up four hundred and ten points, with the biggest surge in six years.

At 7 P.M., Bernanke, Paulson, and Cox met with congressional leaders in Speaker Pelosi's conference room, overlooking the Mall. After photographers and press representatives were asked to leave, Paulson addressed the group. "We are in danger of a broad systemic collapse, and action needs to be taken urgently to head it off," he said. "We need the authority to spend several hundred billion."

Cox invoked his former colleagues' memories of September 11th. "We did extraordinary things then for the good of the country," he said. "This is what has to happen again, even if it is just weeks before an election."

Bernanke pointed out that he was a historian and a student of the Great Depression. "The kind of financial collapse that we're now on the brink of is always followed by a deep, long recession," he said. "If we aren't able to head this off, the next generation of economists will be writing not about the thirties but about this."

Someone asked what the scenario looked like.

Bernanke was cautious. He didn't want to be accused of exaggerating the danger. "You could see a twenty-per-cent decline in the stock market, unemployment at nine to ten per cent, the failure of G.M., certainly, and other large corporate failures. It would be very bad."

The tone of the two most powerful men in the financial world was as frightening as their words. Questions shifted to Paulson.

What are you going to do with the money?

Paulson stressed the need to buy toxic assets, but resisted questions about how that would work. Spencer Bachus, the ranking member of the House Committee on Financial Services, asked about injecting capital directly into banks. Paulson said that he would consider it.

The legislators pressed on how much money would be needed. Paulson finally said, "Several hundred billion means several hundred billion."

"You've got to understand, Mr. Secretary," Barney Frank said. "This cannot be seen as just a Wall Street bailout." He said that executive compensation and foreclosures needed to be addressed. "There's too much anger out there," he added.

Paulson didn't want to get sidetracked by issues that he considered extraneous to the immediate crisis. He knew that if the government tried to cap pay then no one on Wall Street would participate—a state of affairs that Frank later said he found "terribly depressing."

"Without a functioning banking system, things will get much worse on Main Street," Paulson countered. He also stressed that congressional action had to be taken before the markets opened on Monday, or more major institutions might collapse.

And what would happen if such legislation failed in Congress?

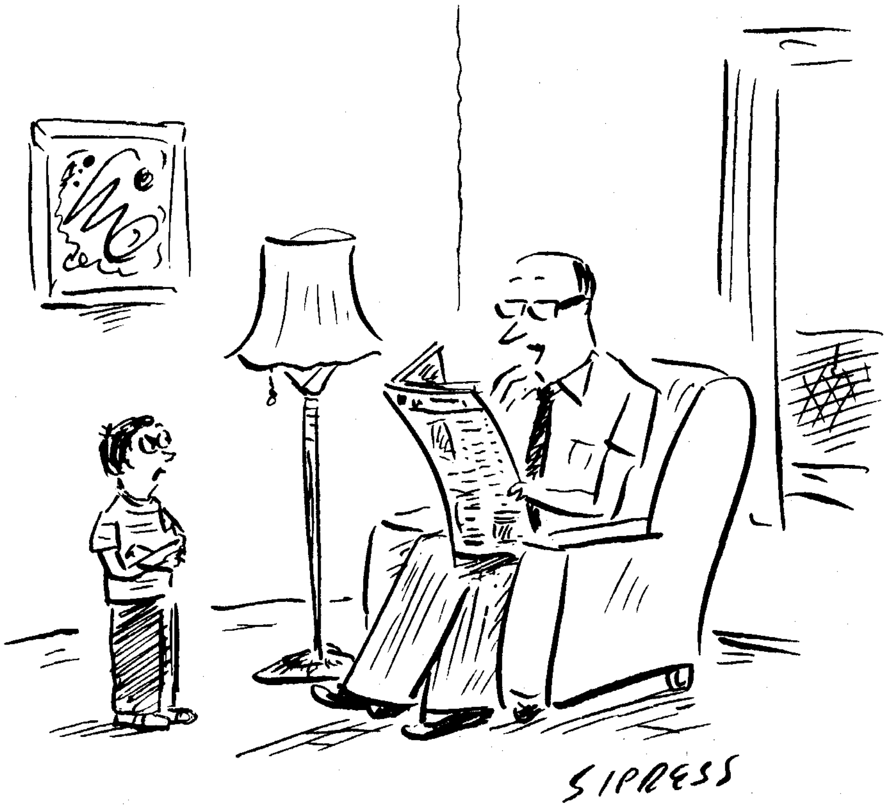
Paulson paused for a moment. "In that case, God help us all."

Barney Frank and Chris Dodd indicated that Congress would coöperate, but with some conditions. According to the *Times*, Majority Leader Reid added, "You have no idea what you're asking me to do. It takes me forty-eight hours to get the Republicans to flush the toilet."

The meeting lasted ninety minutes. Reid, Pelosi, and Paulson agreed to speak at a press conference. Someone suggested that a Republican also speak, but Richard Shelby, of Alabama, a conservative and the ranking Republican on the Senate Banking Committee, interjected, "Y'all don't want me to speak." The laughter helped lighten the mood. The group agreed to make only brief, general comments about what was discussed at the meeting.

Once Paulson had decided on insuring money-market funds in their entirety, it fell to staff members at the Treasury to figure out how to make it happen. They had less than twenty-four hours to implement a program that ordinarily would have taken weeks of study. David Nason, another assistant Treasury secretary, called leading money-market funds to gauge their reaction. Several members of the executive committee of the Investment Company Institute, a national association of U.S. investment companies, including Vanguard, Invesco, T. Rowe Price, and Fidelity, opposed a federal insurance program. All they wanted was a Fed facility that would address their liquidity issues. They feared that insuring money-market funds could be destabilizing. Nason told them, "You're getting this whether you want it or not."

"But it's a liquidity issue," John Bren-



"Someday when you have a kid of your own and you feel the urge to arbitrarily say no just because you can, you'll understand."

• •

nan, the head of Vanguard, persisted.

"That's not where the Secretary is," Nason replied. "This is about confidence, investors feeling safe. Each time we've hoped for a break, we didn't get it. We're using overwhelming force." Most funds eventually agreed to participate. They had little choice. Once Treasury announced such a plan, and even one fund participated in the guarantee program, investors might abandon funds without the guarantee.

Early Friday morning, the Treasury announced a temporary guarantee program for money-market funds in order to protect "the integrity and stability of the global financial system."

Chris Cox convened an emergency meeting of the S.E.C. that evening to consider a ban on short selling, which Blankfein and Mack felt was necessary to save Goldman and Morgan Stanley. Cox was probably the most free-market-oriented of the group, and a ban on short selling went deeply against the grain. The ability to sell short—to profit on a stock's decline—has long been seen as critical to market integrity, enhancing liquidity and the flow of information. In fact, before that day none of the five commission members supported such a ban. During calls that day and the previous day, however, government officials came out in favor of a ban. And in one such call, when Cox said that he was worried about unintended consequences, Paulson grew impatient. "You can sort it out later!" he said. "You have to save them now or they'll be gone while you're still thinking about it."

At the meeting that night, the S.E.C. commissioners were informed that the Treasury and the Fed supported urgent action. In light of this, and the fact that the U.K. had taken a similar step earlier that day, the commission voted unanimously to temporarily ban short selling in seven hundred and ninety-nine financial stocks.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Big enough to make a difference.

Just before the U.S. markets opened, Paulson issued a statement reporting on the previous night's meeting and launching a campaign for a "comprehensive approach" to resolve the crisis. He outlined a "troubled-asset relief program"—TARP—which would remove "illiquid assets that are weighing down our financial institutions and threatening our economy."

News of an insurance program for money-market funds and a comprehensive approach to the root causes of the crisis—no matter how ill defined—ignited a euphoric rally on Wall Street. The Dow Jones average rose four hundred points.

At ten-forty-five, President Bush, flanked by Paulson, Bernanke, and Cox, addressed the country from the Rose Garden. "This is a pivotal moment for America's economy," he began, and went on:

> Our system of free enterprise rests on the conviction that the federal government should interfere in the marketplace only when necessary. Given the precarious state of today's financial markets—and their vital importance to the daily lives of the American people—government intervention is not only warranted; it is essential.

"There were plenty of people around the President who just wanted the free market to work," Paulson told me. "He freed me from all of that. He wanted there to be a free market left for all of us to work with. People don't want to hear this. They don't like him. They want to see him as disengaged. But he was very focussed on what was best for the country."

Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs got a brief reprieve as speculators began to buy back shares and cover the short positions, but the situation of the two firms remained desperate.

Soon Goldman's Blankfein called Mack again. "What do you think of this bank-holding-company idea?" Blankfein asked. Geithner was saying that they could complete the paperwork and become bank holding companies that weekend. "I don't know—what do you think?" Mack asked. Neither acknowledged to the other that he was going to pursue it. But both knew that the survival of their firms was at stake. "You've got to hang in there," Blankfein told Mack. "We're very supportive of you, but if you go under there will be immediate pressure on us."

On Friday afternoon, Paulson, in a teleconference with Geithner and other Fed and S.E.C. officials, said that it was time for President Bush to call the Chinese government in an effort to reassure it that, if it came to the aid of Morgan Stanley, it could count on U.S. government support. The Chinese were understandably cool to the prospect, since the China Investment Corporation, an arm of the government, had already made a $5.6-billion investment in Morgan Stanley in 2007, and had watched the value of its stake plunge in the ensuing financial turmoil. Chinese attempts to invest in some American companies (such as the oil producer Unocal) had caused a political uproar, and the idea of the Chinese increasing their stake in Morgan Stanley worried some people. But Geithner wasn't especially concerned about which country invested in Morgan Stanley, as long as it complied with applicable laws.

On Friday evening, Morgan Stanley's chief financial officer got a call from the head of the firm's Tokyo office, reporting that Mitsubishi U.F.J., the large Japanese bank, was interested in negotiating a stake. John Mack was wary, given what he perceived as the glacial pace of Japanese dealmaking. Nonetheless, he said, "Send them over."

The following morning, a Chinese delegation, led by Gao Xiqing, the vice-chairman of the C.I.C., arrived in New York to meet with Morgan Stanley executives.

Later, Paulson spoke to his Chinese counterpart, Wang Qishan, the vice-premier for economic affairs. President Bush also spoke to President Hu Jintao. According to one person briefed on that conversation, Bush reassured Hu that the U.S. was addressing the crisis and explained the policy steps it was taking. (A spokesperson for Bush declined to comment.)

Paulson's legislative team, drafting the TARP legislation, consulted with Fed officials but stuck to Paulson's view that the bill had to focus on buying assets rather than on making direct capital investments—buying "bad assets" rather than "bad companies." The final draft was only a few pages long.

In Section 6, it stated:

> The Secretary's authority to purchase mortgage-related assets under this Act shall be limited to $700,000,000,000 outstanding at any one time.

At last, the bill had a price tag, designated by Paulson on impulse: the worldwide market for mortgage-backed securities was about $1.4 trillion; seven hundred billion was half that. "It was big enough to make a difference," Paulson says.

EPILOGUE

Late on Sunday, September 21st, the Federal Reserve announced that Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley had become bank holding companies, bringing to an end the tradition of independent investment banks on Wall Street. Despite the arrival of the Chinese delegation, Morgan Stanley ultimately sold twenty-one per cent of the company to the Japanese bank, Mitsubishi, for $9 billion. "The Chinese left in a huff," a Morgan Stanley executive recalls. (The Chinese government declined to comment.) On Tuesday, Goldman Sachs announced that Warren Buffett was buying five billion dollars' worth of preferred stock. On Wednesday, Goldman raised another five billion in a public offering of common stock. The moves staved off what had seemed the imminent collapse of the firms.

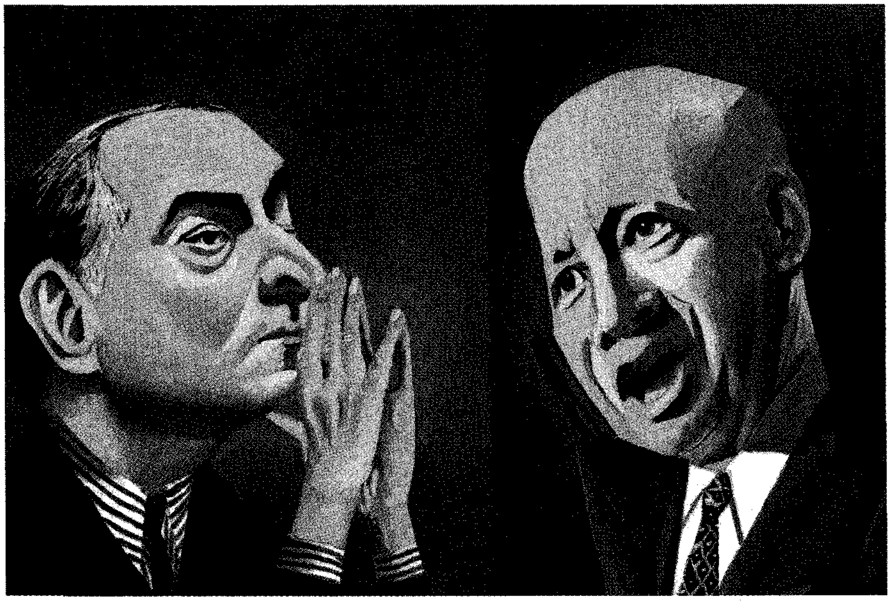
Although Barclays did not buy all of Lehman Brothers, it bought what it really wanted—Lehman's North American investment-banking operations and its presence on Wall Street—for just $250 million. It paid $1.5 billion for Lehman's Manhattan headquarters and other real estate. Bob Diamond called the deal a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," and just a few months later Barclays showed a gain of $3.5 billion on the transaction.

The initial bipartisan support for emergency legislative action turned to hostility once the $700-billion number was attached to the bill. Senators and representatives from both parties reported that calls from constituents were overwhelmingly against the proposal.

On September 29th, the House voted down the legislation. Global markets went into convulsions, the Dow dropped seven hundred and seventy-eight points, and credit markets stayed frozen. Barney Frank, comparing Congress to a wayward child, counselled a nearly distraught Paulson, "Sometimes you have to let the kid run away from home. He gets hungry, he comes back." Thanks to fierce lobbying, the legislation, much modified and expanded to four hundred pages, passed, on October 3rd. "Troubled assets" were redefined to include not just mortgage-related assets but "any other financial instrument" deemed necessary to stabilize the financial system.

In the end, the Treasury didn't buy the troubled assets. Instead, it chose to inject capital directly into the banks, as Bernanke, Geithner, and some at Treasury had suggested all along. On October 13th, Paulson summoned the heads of the country's nine most systemically important banks (including the newest bank holding companies, Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs) and explained the terms on which the government would extend to them and others a total of $250 billion in capital. (To avoid the taint of "nationalization," the government took preferred stock, which carried no voting rights.)

During the next year, the recession that, in Bernanke's words, inevitably follows a financial panic drove unemployment to 9.7 per cent. The economic crisis, the worst since the Depression, destroyed household and retirement savings, pensions, insurance funds, and endowments. Eighty-nine banks have failed this year. Bank of America and Citigroup together got $90 billion in TARP funds and $420 billion in guarantees. Stabilizing A.I.G. cost taxpayers $180 billion. To combat the crisis, the size of the Fed's balance sheet—$850 billion before the Lehman collapse—grew to $2 trillion. General Motors and Chrysler filed for bankruptcy protection, along with nearly a hundred and fifty other public companies—an increase of more than a hundred per cent from the previous year. By March of 2009, nearly nineteen hundred hedge funds had gone out of business.



As John Mack, of Morgan Stanley, and Lloyd Blankfein, of Goldman Sachs, discussed turning their firms into bank holding companies, they knew that the survival of both banks was at stake. "You've got to hang in there," Blankfein said.

Bernanke and Paulson both told me that the effects of Lehman's collapse were worse than they anticipated, and they had expected them to be bad. The question persists: Could Lehman's collapse have been avoided? Paulson and Bernanke have argued that it couldn't. The Fed has statutory emergency powers to lend to nonbanks, but only against what it deems adequate collateral. Lehman, unlike A.I.G., with its healthy insurance businesses, didn't have such collateral. This argument seems to have first surfaced on October 15th, in a speech by Bernanke and in a statement attributed to Paulson by the wire service Market News International. "There's no law that any of us could have used," Paulson reiterated to me.

But Lehman clearly had some solid collateral, even if not enough for a government takeover of a collapsing firm. The very day Lehman failed, the assets from its broker-dealer operations were deemed acceptable as collateral for a series of short-term multibillion-dollar loans from the Fed. In order to insure an orderly winding down, the Fed loaned the broker-dealer unit $62.8 billion on Monday, September 15th, $47.7 billion on Tuesday, and $48.9 billion on Wednesday. (When Barclays bought the unit, it repaid the outstanding Fed loans.) In testimony this summer, Paulson said, "The Fed was able to loan against Lehman collateral and did loan to help facilitate liquidation and bankruptcy." (He did stipulate that a Fed loan would not have saved Lehman Brothers.) It seems likely that such collateral might also have been adequate to support a rescue on the Bear Stearns model.

Paulson and other regulators stress, however, that there was no buyer to play the role for Lehman that JPMorgan Chase had played in the rescue of Bear Stearns. Had Paulson said from the outset that a government-assisted deal was possible, a buyer might have emerged. Instead, he summoned Wall Street's chief executives to the Fed, where he said emphatically that there would be no government assistance, as had already been indicated to the press. If this was simply a tough negotiating tactic, Paulson may have overplayed his hand. He succeeded in getting the Wall Street firms to coöperate, which would have provided welcome political cover from likely hostile reaction to another government bailout, but he failed to secure a buyer. Still, he came close. An orderly sale of Lehman to Barclays, with backing from Wall Street, the U.S., and perhaps the British government, might have been within reach. If so, at the highest levels of the American and British governments there was a breathtaking failure to communicate.

Paulson, Geithner, and Bernanke worked tirelessly to save Lehman—within the limits that they believed to be feasible. And those limits, in light of the public hostility toward bailouts of any kind, were formidable. As the Treasury official told me, "With Lehman Brothers, you said the market has to police itself. It was a disaster. With A.I.G., you say you have to protect the system, and that's a disaster! It's a Hobson's choice. You're not going to win." Even so, Geithner says, "If we had had the authority to prevent a system threat, I would have been prepared to act despite the political costs."

Today, it is widely accepted that the failure of Lehman was indeed a disaster. Its unintended and unforeseen consequences—the run on money-market funds most of all—could arguably have been avoided. Yet saving Lehman would not have addressed the broader problem: the capital shortage in the global banking system. It took a crisis of Lehman's proportions to motivate Congress to act, and, even then, it voted down the TARP legislation the first time.

Lehman's failure and the aftermath remain a source of widespread outrage and confusion. The inconsistent treatment of Lehman and A.I.G., the unsatisfying public explanations, and the subsequent about-face on the TARP bailout—direct injections of capital rather than buying toxic assets—fuelled public skepticism and, inevitably, conspiracy theories. The one that has gained the most currency focusses on the role of Goldman Sachs, since Paulson is a former chairman of the firm and Goldman was the largest recipient of payments (a total of $12.9 billion) from A.I.G. after it was rescued. But Goldman didn't have a unique financial motive for the government to rescue A.I.G. According to Goldman, the firm was fully hedged against an A.I.G. failure. A review of an internal document that Goldman prepared on September 15th last year assessing its exposure to A.I.G. suggests that the firm would have come out slightly ahead if A.I.G. had failed.

Had an A.I.G. collapse triggered a global run on all banks, however, it's likely that Goldman's insurers couldn't have made good on their contracts. But, in such a financial catastrophe, a few defaults on A.I.G.-related swaps contracts hardly would have mattered, since by then all banks, and not just Goldman, likely would have shut their doors.

The circumstances of Merrill's sale to Bank of America also have remained controversial. There was a public uproar over the revelation that Merrill paid $3.6 billion in bonuses before the deal closed. The ex-Goldman bankers Montag and Kraus also got their guarantees, $39.4 million and $29.4 million respectively, even though, in Kraus's case, it was mere days from the time he began work at Merrill until the deal was announced. On January 22nd, Ken Lewis met with John Thain and demanded his resignation. Bank of America publicly blamed Thain for the bonus payments, maintaining that they were his decision, not Lewis's. (This despite the fact that the bonus payments were authorized by the document attached to the merger agreement that Lewis signed.) That day, CNBC reported on Thain's $1.2-million office renovation. Feeling betrayed and un-

MOTHER'S QUAIL

In the copse
of her mind, a fluster
of quail, tonic
of quail, each her own
failure,
boozy and flushed
from briar by a panic
gripped from kin
to kin,

so they hover—
mother and daughter
and daughter
and daughter—
large-bodied, terrified,
though nobody
wants them.

Cloud of quail, eying
steeple heights
but failing,
her covey backlit
and looming, huge
as buckshot
when it balloons
down, scribbling earth
with its landings.

They tell a tranquil-
lized fortune:
days of luckless
labor and sadnesses
too frail to utter.
Shoulder to shoulder,
they fail,
the quail of her
actual and the quail
of her oblivion.

—*Paula Bohince*

justly accused, the suddenly unemployed Thain was now a public symbol of Wall Street's excess. (Thain subsequently reimbursed the cost of the renovation. Neither he nor Fleming took a bonus for 2008.) Bank of America is now embroiled in litigation over what it did or did not disclose to shareholders before they voted to approve the merger.

These controversies aside, one fact is inescapable: billions of taxpayer dollars were invested in the very institutions that caused the crisis. Multimillion-dollar annual bonuses continued, even at A.I.G. Lehman's Dick Fuld may have had to sell his sixteen-room Park Avenue apartment for $6 million below the asking price—of $32 million—but lenders have commenced foreclosures on nearly three million homes since last October.

Geithner told me, "It seems unjust. But look what happened to the global economy after Lehman failed. Unemployment in the U.S. went to 9.5 per cent. It's not Wall Street that suffers when you 'teach people a lesson.' The tragedy of financial populism is that you do terrible things to innocent people."

Barney Frank used the analogy of de-Baathification, pointing out that U.S. efforts to purge Iraq of supporters of Saddam Hussein were a disaster. "You can't go out and shoot the bankers," he said. "You can't have an economy without a functioning credit system. People are angry. They're furious. But you have no option but to live with these people."

More broadly, the events of that week are likely to redefine the debate over the role of markets in a democracy, and even the nature of capitalism. At least since the Reagan revolution of the early nineteen-eighties, free-market ideology has been ascendant, with even Democratic Administrations following its precepts of market discipline, limited regulation, and unfettered rewards. George W. Bush was only its latest exponent, governing on a platform of economic growth and lower taxes. Yet it was Bush, and his Republican appointees Paulson and Bernanke, who orchestrated the virtual nationalization of the U.S. financial system. Although a vocal minority continues to argue that the system should have been left to the forces of creative destruction, the overwhelming consensus is that free-market principles failed to address a global financial panic. In an intellectual debate that has been going on since the Depression, Lehman's failure may mark a victory of John Maynard Keynes over Adam Smith—the government interventionists over laissez-faire capitalists.

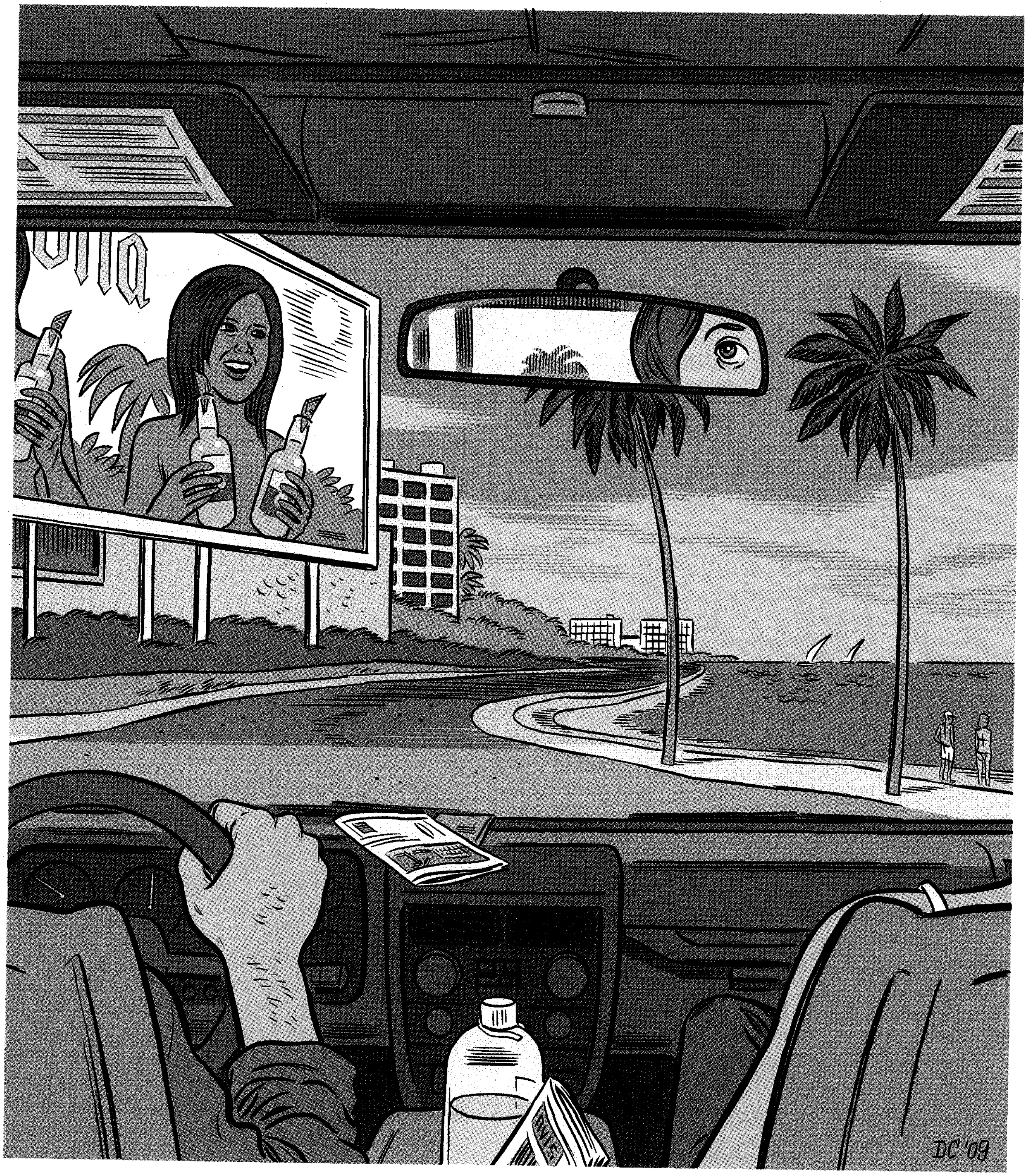
Congress seems incapable of confronting this reality, especially with many Republicans adhering to pre-Lehman free-market doctrine. Senator Shelby said this summer on CNBC, "I don't believe anything is too big to fail. We should let the market discipline these banks and if we let them do it, that would help." The U.S. regulatory framework is a patchwork of agencies that largely date to the Depression and have proved inadequate to restrain market excesses. It seems absurd that A.I.G. would report to a savings-and-loan regulator, Lehman Brothers to the S.E.C., and Bank of America to the Fed. The Obama Administration has started to address many of these issues by proposing new regulations, including expanding the powers of the Federal Reserve to oversee different types of firms that could pose a risk to financial stability, as Lehman did. But thus far Congress, absorbed in the health-care debate, has shown scant interest in enacting any legislation. And, despite outrage over lavish bonuses and much talk about curtailing excessive risk-taking on Wall Street, President Obama has made only a modest proposal for greater shareholder oversight of executive compensation, leaving it to the French to press for stronger curbs on excessive pay.

Meanwhile, the economy is still in a deep recession, with unemployment at nearly ten per cent. But the simple fact is this: America did not plunge into the economic abyss it faced that Thursday night. The bold stroke of guaranteeing the money-market funds stopped the panic and halted withdrawals from the funds. The commercial-paper market slowly came back to life and, with it, the credit markets. Turning Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs into bank holding companies with Fed supervision and support stopped the run on investment banks. The details and mechanics of the TARP legislation proved less important than the sense that a comprehensive plan to address the crisis was under way. The reprieve bought enough time for the reëmergence of reason over unbridled fear. ♦

FICTION

LAND OF THE LIVING

BY SAM SHEPARD



"It's just amazing how friendly you become when you're on Xanax," she says. This is after we've been standing in the long, snaking customs line for over an hour in the torrid Cancún heat. We're being herded, shoulder to shoulder with all the other Minnesota "snowbirds" frantically fanning themselves with their customs forms.

"I know," I say to her. "I'm amazed myself."

"You're amazed?"

"Yes, I am."

"Why should you be amazed?"

"Well, I feel this friendly person coming out in me, and I wonder if maybe that's my real nature. You know—the real me."

"What is it that has changed, exactly?"

"I'm on Xanax."

"I understand that," she says. "But what is it that makes you more friendly than before you took the Xanax?"

"Well, I'm not a particularly unfriendly person, am I?"

"Not now, you're not."

"No—I mean, I don't ordinarily think of myself as a sullen, bad-tempered kind of a guy."

"I didn't say sullen."

"Well—"

"You don't usually go out of your way to be chatty. Let's put it that way."

"Chatty?"

"You're chatting about the weather with total strangers. You never do that. Not as long as I've known you."

"I thought it was kind of remarkable. Don't you?"

"What?" she says.

"The weather. The change. The extreme difference between here and St. Paul in a matter of just three and a half hours."

"That's why people come here from St. Paul. The change in the weather. That's why we're here."

"Yes, I know that, but it's still remarkable, isn't it? A hundred and five here and minus thirty back there?"

"Never mind," she says, and turns toward the slow-motion overhead fan.

There's a group of elementary-school teachers from Duluth right in front of us who suddenly burst into singing "The Bear Went Over the Mountain" in perfect unison, with no attempt at harmony. I guess the pulverizing heat and the waiting have tipped them right over the edge. The Mexican officials in SWAT-team uniforms look on in stony silence, arms clasped behind their backs, black Mayan eyes unmoved by this Nordic display of bravado. Our teen-age kids have surrendered to the heat, slumping to the concrete floor, heads propped on their backpacks. They've stopped volunteering any conversation.

DAN CLOWES

"Actually, I'm just glad to be alive," I blurt out after standing there awhile in a kind of stupor, hypnotized by the schoolteachers' ditty.

"You're glad to be alive?" she repeats in astonishment. "Is that what you just said?"

"Yes, I am. Just like Arnold Palmer."

"Arnold Palmer?"

"Isn't that what he says these days? Now that he's ancient, hobbling down the fairway? 'I'm just glad to be here. Just glad to be alive.' That's what he says when they run up to him with microphones and TV cameras. You know, for those golf-show interviews. Even when he's having trouble with his putting, his swing. Isn't that what he always says now?"

"I have no idea. I thought he was dead."

"Arnold Palmer? No. He's very much alive. He's an icon."

"Whatever," she says, turning away again.

"Well, it's true," I continue. "I'm thrilled to still be here—back in the 'land of the living.' "

"I didn't realize you'd left us," she says.

"That's the way I always feel when I've survived an airplane trip."

"Survived?"

"I always feel like I'm actually going to die when I get on an airplane. Like this is it, the end of the line—inevitable. Then, after we land and get back on dry land it feels as though I've lived through a kind of certain death and come out the other end. That's why I take Xanax, and that's why I say I'm glad to be alive."

She stares at me for a second in absolute bewilderment, as though she were looking into the face of a stranger, then turns back to the long, stale line of humans in limbo.

"My God," she says. "What is going on with this customs thing? We've never had to wait this long before." Just beyond the singing schoolteachers (who've now taken to doing the song in rounds, like Campfire Girls) is a sombre couple I recognize from the Lindbergh airport back in St. Paul. The man, in a wheelchair, somewhat older than the woman—late fifties, maybe—has a blanket across his lap, a plaid scarf around his neck in spite of the stifling heat, and an odd alpine-style hat with a little brush sticking out of the band. The woman (his wife?) stands behind him, very erect, hands propped at the ready on the gray grips of the wheelchair, as though assigned to a permanent grim vigil. She is plainly pretty in a Midwestern open-faced, innocent way; wearing a light linen suit and white pumps—not exactly the expected attire for Yucatán beach life. The two of them seem completely detached from the goings on: the silly singing; the constant fanning of everyone around them, which has now become some kind of communal gesture of contempt for the Mexican bureaucracy. Nothing seems to ruffle the couple's deep stoicism. Now and then, the woman slips a white handkerchief from her pocket and gently dabs the man's forehead and the corners of his mouth, although I can't make out any moisture. He doesn't seem to be suffering the consequences of a stroke or a neurological disorder but, rather, a much longer and slower debilitation. Whatever it is, it has clearly taken its toll on the two of them.

Finally, the line begins to trickle forward. We prod our kids up off the floor and shove the luggage down through a roped-off alley-maze toward the customs inspectors. The abrupt, unexpected flow of the line seems to catch the schoolteachers up short. They're scrambling for their baggage. The austere couple rolls silently on. The man's pale head slowly tilts upward, drawn by the tropical sunlight blasting through the tall arched windows of the main terminal. Each window frames an absolutely motionless palm tree. Heat waves brand themselves across the glass in vapored sheets. A single green parrot desperately wings his way from one palm to the next as though he might not make it, as though the savage heat might drop him flat in midflight.

We find ourselves crammed into a red Jeep Wrangler with a flapping canvas top, the much larger Chevy Suburban I'd reserved having been let go due to our delay in the customs line. (Mexico waits for no man.) My son immediately drops

Advertisement

NEW YORKER ON THE TOWN .COM

The home of *The New Yorker*'s Advertising and Promotion Departments, featuring our advertisers and their products.

ENTER TO WIN

EMIRATES "FIVE DAYS IN DUBAI" SWEEPSTAKES

Includes two round-trip economy-class tickets on Emirates, luxurious first-class accommodations for four nights at Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, and a day and evening sightseeing tour, courtesy of Dubai Tourism.

For more details, see page 48 or go to newyorkeronthetown.com/emirates.

SHOPPING

Learn about exclusive discounts and offers

EVENTS

Receive invitations to exclusive *New Yorker* events

TRAVEL

Discover new travel destinations

MORE

Take advantage of special sweepstakes and promotions

newyorkeronthetown.com

off to sleep, his six-foot-plus rail-thin frame scrunched up in back with the luggage. Our daughter leans her head against the pipe-roll bar, a T-shirt wedged between the steel and her soft temple. Thick jungle air pours across her face. My wife has gone completely silent now, staring up at a gigantic billboard of nearly naked brown twins coyly concealing their perfect breasts behind icy bottles of Corona.

"Have you got a girlfriend?" she asks me out of the blue.

"A girlfriend?" I say, checking to see if our daughter has overheard this, but she, too, has been lulled to sleep by the heat.

"Yes, that's right. A girlfriend," my wife repeats.

"Where did this come from?"

"Don't act so surprised. You could very easily have a girlfriend and I'd never know it, would I? How would I know?"

"I'm sixty. Those days are over."

"Lots of young women are attracted to that these days. It's become chic or something."

"Attracted to what?"

"Older men. Men of influence."

"Men of influence?"

"Don't laugh. You know what I'm talking about."

"No, I don't have a girlfriend."

"How did I know you were going to say exactly that?" She stifles a little giggle, biting her lower lip.

"Could we talk about this later?" I suggest quietly.

"When?" she says.

"When we're not on vacation. When we're not riding down the Yucatán Peninsula with our children directly behind us."

"You do, don't you?" She smiles slowly at me with a look of supreme recognition, then turns away toward the flying jungle. We pass a broken-down rock corral with ribby horses nosing through dust and their own manure. Blue patches of bottle flies blanket their eyes.

"Does this mean we're going to be silent and sour the whole rest of the trip?" I ask the back of her neck.

"We can be any way you want," she says.

"Where in the world did this idea come from, anyway?"

"What idea?"

"The idea that I have a girlfriend."

"It came from your cell phone, actually."

"My cell phone?"

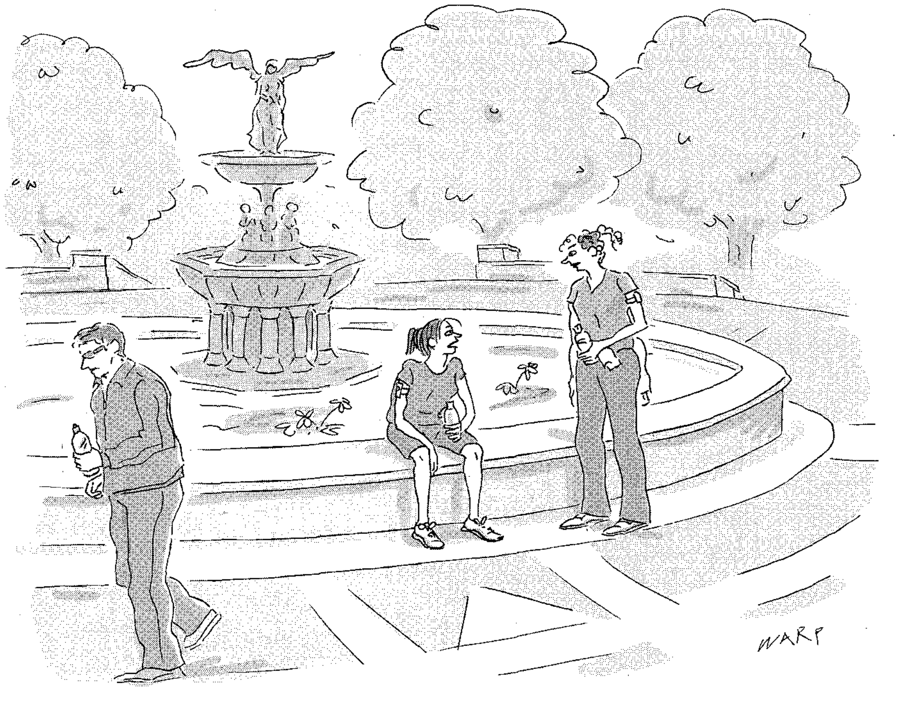
"Yeah, that's right."

"My cell phone?"

"Are you going to just keep repeating yourself?"

"I'm repeating you."

"Yes, God damn it, it came from your



"I'm done—I only jog far enough to burn off the cheesecake I had for breakfast."

cell phone!" she bursts out. Both kids shift and grumble without opening their eyes.

"Could we talk about this later?" I say.

"That's something you said before, too."

"I'm serious."

"I don't want to talk about it at all, actually. It's ridiculous. There's nothing to talk about anyway," she says with finality.

"So you're just going to go ahead and believe in some crazy fantasy, some half-baked notion that popped into your head? Is that it?"

"It didn't 'pop' into my head. It came over your cell phone."

"What did?"

"A woman's voice."

"Oh—well, did you ask who it was? It could've been someone at the office."

"It wasn't someone at the office. I'm familiar with everyone at the office, and this wasn't one of them."

"It could've been anyone."

"Oh, please—"

"Well, it could've."

"All right, sure—yeah—right—it could've been anyone in the whole wide world, but it wasn't."

"I'm just saying—"

"Oh, shut up!" she suddenly shrieks. Our son wakes with a jolt and grabs hold of the roll bar, waking his sister.

"What's wrong?" he pants, with his eyes popped out toward the road.

"Nothing," I say. "Nothing. Just go back to sleep."

"What were you yelling about, Mom?" our daughter asks.

"I was yelling at your father."

"How come?"

"Because he's trying to deny he has a girlfriend, and I've found out he has a girlfriend. Now go back to sleep."

"Great. That's really great," I say to my wife. "Congratulations."

"You're welcome," she says, and turns her entire back to me now.

Silence, except for the droning of the Jeep's oversized tires and the relentless jungle wind bashing the canvas top. The kids have burrowed down into the luggage and returned to sleep. Her back is perfectly expressing expulsion. Exiled in the Yucatán.

"I might just as well have come down here all by myself," I say to her spine. No answer. We roar past Playa. Miles of fiesta-colored hammocks hanging in the heat; giant ochre pottery in the shapes of Mayan demons and once sacred jungle creatures—jaguars, serpents, eagles, frogs. Everything's for sale on the *carretera:* rugs, serapes, Day-Glo wall hangings with luridly macho Aztec scenes—feathered warriors valiantly protecting young maidens from jade-eyed panthers. Huge billboards welcome us in English to the "Mayan Riviera," as though Mexico were embarrassed to be Mexican. "I realize what it is now," I say out loud to myself but hoping she'll somehow respond. She doesn't. Her back remains a rigid blockade.

The verdant jungle keeps rushing past. Now and then, a gap in the dense foliage. Daylight cracks through the tangle of vines and chechem. Fleeting glimpse of an old man with his burro laden with plastic milk containers filled from some secret cenote. Old sense of parallel lives. Separate. Haunted. I stumble on, just going on desperation now more than anything: "I think I realize now what it is about the Xanax—how come I get so friendly on it." I'm talking entirely to myself. The kids are snoring loudly. "It's like with jazz musicians," I continue. "I remember all those guys down at the Five Spot in the sixties. They were all using smack back then. That was the drug of choice. I asked a drummer once why he was using it, and you know what he said?" I don't know why I'm making a question out of this. Nobody's home. I soldier on. "He told me he used it because it stopped all the inner chatter in his head. Isn't that amazing? It created a silence, and then he could play."

For miles, nothing happens. The mind goes on doing cartwheels, shuffling through its files, rewriting the past, then tripping on some little tidbit of what it calls reason: "What were you doing answering my cell phone, anyway? I don't answer your cell phone, do I?"

"Because it was ringing," she says out of nowhere.

"I thought you were asleep."

"I'm not."

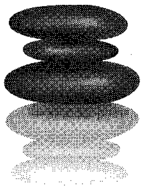
"I thought you were pretending to be asleep."

"I'm not pretending anything," she says, still offering only her flat back.

"So my cell phone was ringing and you picked it up—"

"It was ringing its fool head off, doing that dumb riff from 'Purple Rain,' or whatever it is, jumping around on the

McLeanHospital
A Harvard Medical School Affiliate



3 East
AT MCLEAN HOSPITAL

An intensive DBT residence for teens and college-age women with impulsive and self-endangering behaviors.

877.967.7233 www.3East.org

Journey Back in Time.

We offer 37 historical study tours. All are led by noted scholars and reflect our 34 years of experience. Visit www.archaeologicaltrs.com, call 212-986-3054 or toll-free 866-740-5130.

archaeological tours
LED BY NOTED SCHOLARS
superb itineraries, unsurpassed service

WRITE
FICTION, SCREENPLAYS, MEMOIR & MORE

Gotham Writers' Workshop
CLASSES BEGIN IN TWO WEEKS
ONLINE AND IN NYC
Selected "Best of the Web" by *Forbes*
WritingClasses.com

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK NOW
Leading subsidy book publisher seeks manuscripts. Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, juvenile, religious, etc. New authors welcomed. For free 32-page illustrated guidebook **TD-70, call 1-800-821-3990 or write to: Vantage Press, 419 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016**
www.vantagepress.com

French & Italian Holiday Rentals
Live like a European in your own chateau, villa or farmhouse. Weekly rentals. Most regions.

www.villeetvillage.com
(510)559-8080
VILLE ET VILLAGE®

The Addiction you MUST have!

a fitting challenge
Stave
handcrafted wooden jigsaw
PUZZLES
www.StavePuzzles.com 802-295-5200

Undiminished zest for life!

Diverse and appealing retirement community minutes from Oberlin College and its Conservatory of Music. Over 400 cultural events a year. Coordinated system of residential and health care options.

KENDAL®
at Oberlin
Serving older adults in the Quaker tradition.
Oberlin, Ohio
800.548.9469
www.kao.kendal.org

The Screenwriting Expo

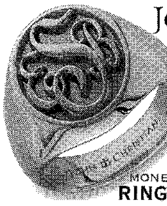
Hear Oscar- and Emmy-winning writers.

Pitch your story to Hollywood execs.

135 screenwriting seminars.

Oct. 15-18 in Los Angeles

http://nyscreenwriter.com



JOHN ⚓ CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN

RAISED
MONOGRAM
SEVEN DIFFERENT STYLES
$590

3-DAY RUSH AVAILABLE!
MONEY BACK GUARANTEE AND FREE RESIZE
RINGBOX.COM 1.888.646.6466

Blazer Sale
Blazers for ladies and gentlemen
15 colors. All sizes.
Were $165, Now $145

Hunter and Coggins
Asheville, NC 1-800-343-9396
hunterandcoggins.com

A distinctive psychiatric hospital

AUSTEN RIGGS CENTER
Intensive psychotherapy in an open community.
Stockbridge, MA | AustenRiggs.org | 800-51-RIGGS

TIMESHARES 60-80% off Retail!
★ Best Resorts, Prices &Weeks
★ 500+ Worldwide Resorts!
★ Call For FREE Catalog
Buy Direct! (800) 348-0094
holidaygroup.com/save

bed. I only picked it up to stop the stupid ringing and jumping.”

“And who answered?”

“You're asking me?” she says. Like an apparition, an old barefoot Indian woman with a stack of firewood stands hunched over by the side of the road, waiting to cross six lanes of menacing traffic. Trucks shriek past her in both directions. It looks as if she's been waiting there for hours. Dusk is descending through the bands of heat, and all the great-tailed grackles are gathering in the locust trees.

By the time we reach the tiny resort in the pitch-black night, I'm convinced that my life has capsized completely. I am worse than alone. I am a man travelling with bitter enemies who happen to be his most intimate family. It's become Greek, or something worse. A roly-poly concierge emerges from an archway of bougainvillea, pushing a wheelbarrow and clenching a flashlight between his teeth. He's very glad to see us, he says, once he has spit the flashlight out, his warm smile landing on our sorry faces. He informs us that the owners have gone to bed. They had stayed up waiting for us, but it got too late. He has the key, though, and will show us to our rooms. He stacks our luggage on the wheelbarrow, bites down on the flashlight again, and we all follow him down the twisting stone path. Wind generators on tall metal poles are humming and flapping like exotic birds. The constant wind off the Caribbean is tearing at the palms, forcing them into a savage dance. I have this strange wish, as we follow the bobbing beam of the flashlight, that we were all different people—strangers just happening to come together in the night. How much happier we might be if we didn't know each other at all. No history. No remorse.

Daybreak. The wind has calmed and the sea is flat and smooth clear to the horizon. The giant red sun presses up against the distant arc of the earth. How far away is the rest of the world? I'm the first one awake and happy to be alone on the beach. Tiny white crabs skitter into their holes at my approach. A string of sandpipers hurries ahead of me, darting in and out of the quiet surf. Above, the frigate bird soars. Turning back in the direction of the ancient Mayan ruins, I see the couple from St. Paul staring silently at the rising sun, the woman holding her vigil behind the wheelchair exactly as she did at the airport. The man, in dark glasses, sits erect with his hat in his lap, both hands holding the brim. As the monster sun mounts, the couple turns rosy red, then slowly bright orange, as though they might suddenly burst into flame, then crumble in ash to the sand. Neither of them moves an inch; they are frozen in the burning light. They have finally arrived. My daughter slips up beside me, still half asleep, in sweatpants and a T-shirt with Bob Marley's face screaming across her chest.

“Hi, Dad. I've never seen the sun as red as that, have you?”

“Only down here. I guess we must be closer to it or something. The equator. Is that it?”

“Yeah, I guess. Did you have breakfast yet?”

“Nope. I don't even know if the kitchen's open.”

“I thought I heard plates clanking up there.”

“That's always a good sign,” I say, giving her a kiss on the forehead.

A slight talcum-powder smell that I remember from when she was a baby goes dashing through me. Pure sweetness in the midst of this heartbreak. She takes my arm, and we head off through the white sand toward the dining room. I take a short look back over my shoulder, but the couple from St. Paul have vanished. I stop and turn around to scan the beach for them.

“What's the matter, Dad?”

“I don't know. I just saw those people down on the beach and now they're gone.”

“What people?”

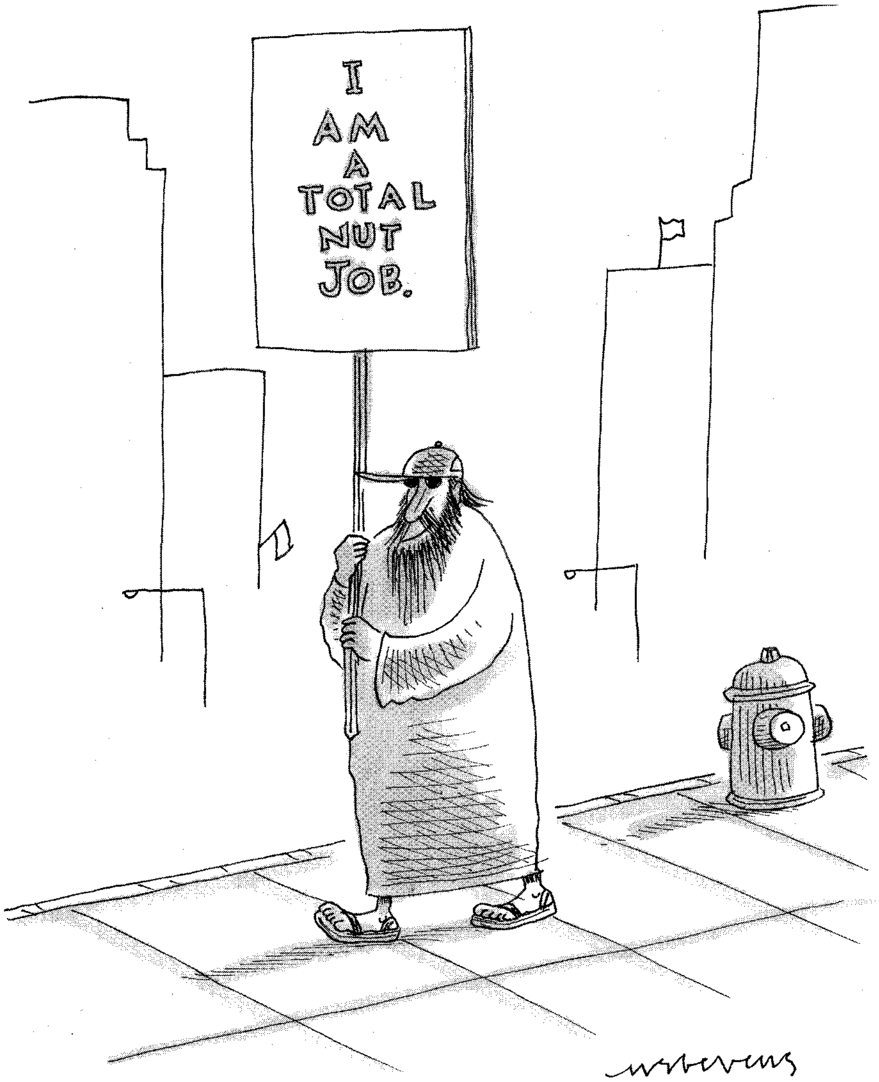
“That couple that was standing in line with us back at the airport. You probably didn't notice them.”

“I was sleeping.”

“Yeah. They just disappeared. How could that be?”

“I don't know. I'm hungry, aren't you?”

The tables in the dining room are set with pink napkins and bright sprigs of bougainvillea propped in skinny glass vases. A Mayan waiter is pouring ice water from a metal pitcher. We sit by the window across from a pair of women with boyish haircuts, dressed exactly alike, in white starched shirts and red ties. They hold hands across the table and


I AM A TOTAL NUT JOB.

• •

stare out at the crashing surf. New Age music is playing in hypnotic repetition, like massage-parlor background atmosphere. It gives the room a gloomy, apocalyptic air. Nobody's smiling. The spectacular view of the white beach stretches clear down the narrow peninsula, evaporating into billowy sea foam. Two dark soldiers emerge, strolling casually along the surf line, their hawklike Indian faces set hard against camouflage uniforms, black machine guns strapped to their backs. A fleet of white pelicans sail past them, then dip low to the water. One of them plunges headlong into the green tide and comes up spewing mullet. "I just want you to know something, Emma," I tell my daughter as I smooth the pink napkin on my knee. "Your mother has no idea what she's talking about."

"What do you mean?" she says.

"Yesterday, in the car."

"What'd she say?"

"About— Didn't you hear what she was telling you?"

"Oh, about the girlfriend, you mean?"

"Yes."

"What about it?"

"Well—it's not true. It's a complete fabrication. I mean—my cell phone happened to be ringing, and she picked it up and—"

"I really don't want to hear about it, Dad," she says, squeezing a wedge of lime onto her melon. "That's between you and her."

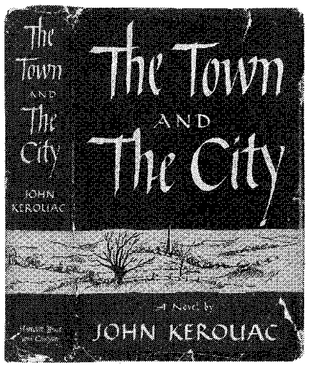
"Who? Me and who?"

"Mom. Who else?"

"Well, there's just no truth to it at all, is what I'm trying to say."

"It doesn't matter. It's got nothing to do with me."

"Well, it does, Emma. You're part of this family. I just don't want there to be

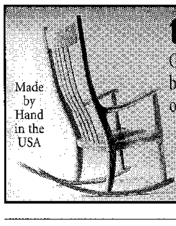

SWANN

Kerouac's first book, first edition, NY, 1950, signed and inscribed to a childhood neighbor. Estimate $5,000 to $7,500.

AT AUCTION
Oct 1 at 1:30pm
19th & 20th Century Literature
Specialist: Christine von der Linn
212-254-4710, ext 20
cvonderlinn@swanngalleries.com
Illustrated Catalogue: $35
104 East 25th St • New York, NY 10010
View catalogue and bid online at
www.swanngalleries.com

THEATERMANIA
Up-to-date reviews, news, and tickets
Broadway • Off-Broadway • Nationwide
Over ONE MILLION members enjoy our theater discounts and special offers.
JOIN FOR FREE AND YOU MAY WIN TICKETS TO A HIT SHOW!
visit www.TheaterMania.com

CELEBRATION BOWL
Personalized Crystal Bowls for Special Occasions
Weddings - Anniversaries
Recognition - Retirement
Custom Inscriptions? Yes.
Rush Delivery Available.
8.5" - $149 12" - $249
831-427-3512
www.celebrationbowl.com


Made by Hand in the USA
the Weeks Rocker™
Guaranteed the most comfortable and beautiful, and the best constructed rocker, or your money back, including shipping.
Available for Christmas
800-986-3187
www.garyweeks.com

Margaret W. Wong Immigration Center
www.imwong.com
1-866-254-0687
Preeminent Immigration Lawyers
Green Cards, H-1B, Deportation, Motions, Criminal Aliens, Work Permits, US Citizen
Listen to Margaret Wong Thursdays 9pm at http://chataboutit.com

THE NEW YORKER ONLINE

newyorker.com

VIDEO: CONVERSATIONS WITH JAMES SUROWIECKI

Watch the author of the Financial Page column in discussion with policymakers, business leaders, and economists.

This month, James Surowiecki talks to **Alan Mulally**, the C.E.O. of Ford, about his company's path to profitability, electric cars, and the future of the automobile industry.

Visit **newyorker.com/go/mulally** today.

AUDIBLE.COM/NEWYORKER

some weird misunderstanding going on."

"There's no misunderstanding," she says and smiles across our table at the pair of women, still holding hands.

"I just don't know where she comes up with this stuff, to tell you the truth. I mean, out of nowhere she makes this wild accusation. It's just—"

"Can we talk about something else, Dad? We're on vacation."

"Sure," I say, and stare down into the swirling cloud of cream in my coffee.

A man with a goatee and Leicas strapped around his neck enters the dining room with two statuesque models. They stand aloof, meeting nobody's eyes, scanning the tables for a strategic location. The man raises his index finger to the waiter and points to a corner table, away from the direct sun. The waiter nods and offers a little half bow. The models glide with a studied cadence, as though every gesture were being played out for a spellbound audience.

"Are you getting excited about college?" I ask my daughter after a long pause.

"Yes," she says. "I am."

"Have you thought about what you're going to take?"

"Environmental studies, I think. There's also a class on women in the Civil War."

"That ought to be interesting. Which women? Do you mean famous women or—"

"Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary Todd Lincoln. Women like that."

"Right," I say. "Mary Todd went nuts, didn't she?"

"Did she?"

"I think she did. After the assassination. Went into seclusion. Talked to herself—"

"Really?" my daughter says.

"I think so."

"Is that a sign of insanity?"

"What?"

"Talking to yourself?"

"Well—"

"Because I talk to myself all the time."

"You do?" I say.

"Well, not all the time."

"Sure. I mean, no—we all talk to ourselves some of the time."

"Do you talk to yourself?" she asks.

"Sure. I mean, now and then."

"What do you talk about? With yourself."

"Well—nothing, really."

"Nothing?"

"No, just little questions. Little—"

"Like what?" she says.

"Like, where did you leave your glasses, now? Or—"

"Oh, yeah, but that's just asking yourself something out loud. Everybody does that. But I mean do you carry on long dialogues and have arguments with yourself? Stuff like that?"

"Arguments?" I say.

"Yes."

"No, do you?"

"Not really."

"Good. I'm glad to hear that. You had me worried there for a second." My daughter smiles and plops a chunk of pineapple into her mouth. "Well, that all sounds really interesting, Emma. Mary Todd Lincoln and Harriet Beecher Stowe."

"Right. She's the one Lincoln called 'the little lady who started this great war.' "

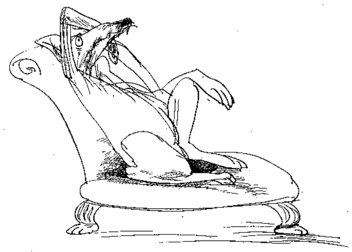
The taller model at the corner table starts giggling maniacally and slapping her long ebony thighs as though she had just heard the funniest punch line on earth. The photographer and the other model look on, poker-faced, as their cohort convulses into a choking fit. Then the shorter model stands and starts pounding her between the shoulder blades while the photographer just sits there doing nothing. The taller one leaps out of her chair, spitting and gagging, while the other woman keeps bashing her in the back. Then the two of them go running hysterically across the foyer and into the bathroom. The man in the goatee is left alone at the table. He pulls out a French newspaper, flaps it open, takes a sip of ice water, and starts reading about the bad state of the world.

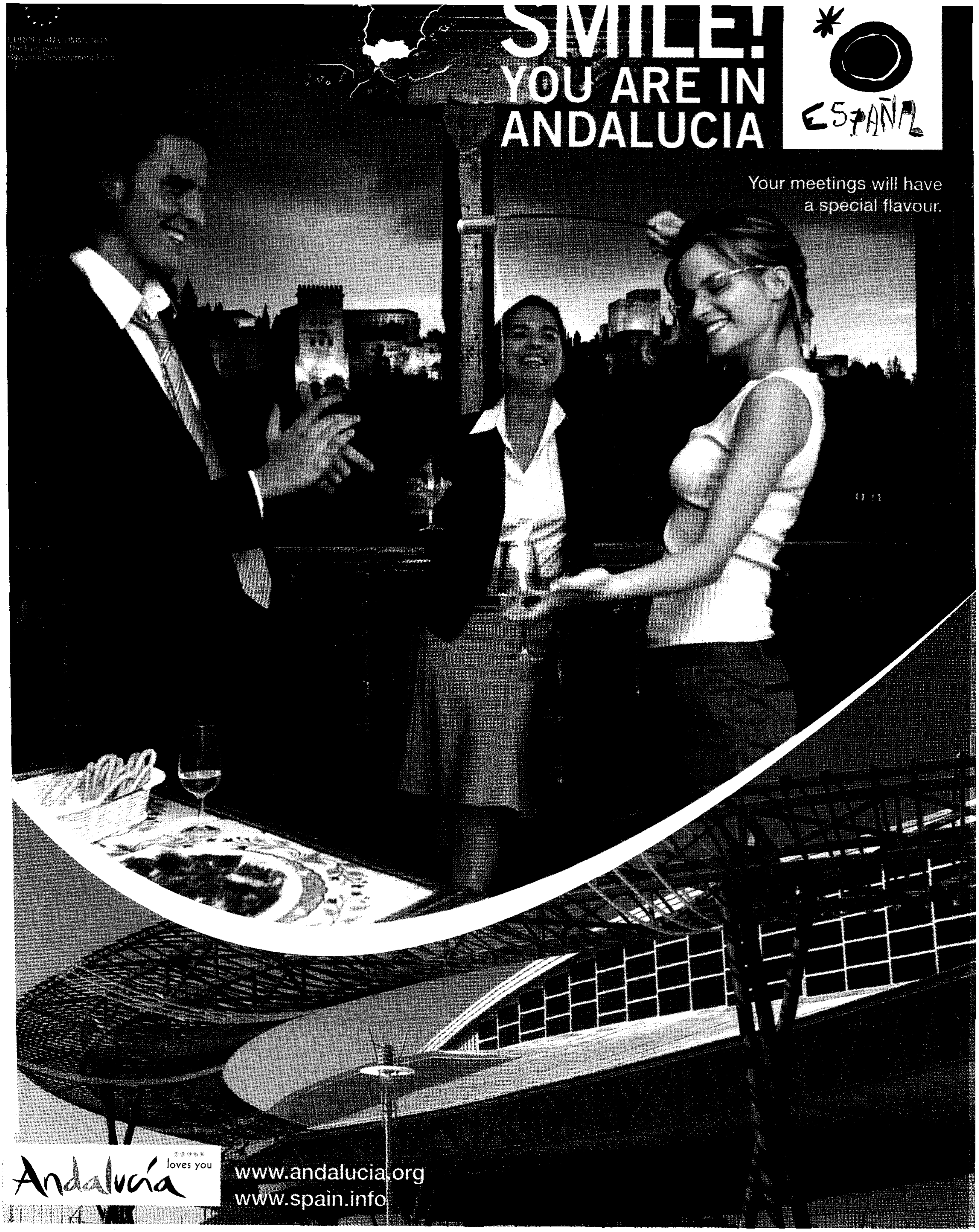
"What was that?" my daughter says.

"Something got caught in her pipes, I guess." My wife and son appear in the yellow archway of the dining room and spot the two of us at the table.

"Morning," she says as they approach the table.

"Morning," I say. "Did the wind




SMILE!
YOU ARE IN
ANDALUCIA
ESPAÑA
Your meetings will have
a special flavour.
Andalucía
loves you
www.andalucia.org
www.spain.info

TOURIST OFFICES OF SPAIN

Water Tower Place, suite 915 East 845 North Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL 60611 Tel. 1.312.642.1992 Fax: 1.312.642.9817 e-mail: chicago@tourspain.es
8383 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 960 Beverly Hills, CA 90211 Tel: 1.323.658.7188 Fax: 1.323.658.1061 e-mail: losangeles@tourspain.es
1395 Brickell Avenue, suite 1130 Miami, FL 33131 Tel: 1.305.358.1992 Fax: 1.305.358.8223 *e-mail: miami@tourspain.es*
666 Fifth Avenue, 35th floor New York, NY 10103 Tel: 1.212.265.8822 Fax: 1.212.265.8864 e-mail: nuevayork@tourspain.es

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: BAEZA © TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN; ÚBEDA © KEN WELSH/ALAMY

Andalucía: Where the Renaissance Reigns

The main road leading to the twin cities of **Úbeda** and **Baeza** snakes over the mountains, then dips into the Guadalquivir River valley. Long miles of olive groves breeze by, until Renaissance buildings rise incongruously from the ochre-colored landscape. Often compared with such Italian wonders as Brescia or Ferrara, Úbeda and Baeza were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003. Both of these Andalucian cities are credited with introducing Renaissance ideas to Spain—and nowhere else in the country do the clean, symmetrical lines of that era so clearly dominate.

Just as Barcelona had its Antonio Gaudí, Úbeda owes its grandeur to the inspiration of the sixteenth-century architect Andrés de Vandelvira, who was commissioned by the local nobility to emulate the palaces and public works of the Medicis. This small city of only thirty-six thousand contains more than a hundred mansions and palaces, and in its old town, a short walk in any direction guarantees an encounter with history.

Úbeda's stateliest square, **Plaza de Vázquez de Molina,** is considered the best example of Renaissance town planning in Spain. Lining the square is the **Hospital de Santiago,** a cultural and conference center with a vast central courtyard and polished white Carrara marble columns. Other structures include the **Sacred Chapel of El Salvador,** the **Collegiate Church of Santa María de los Reales Alcázares,** and the city hall, called **Palace of the Chains** because of its decorative ironwork. Also on Plaza Vázquez de Molina: a sixteenth-century palace that serves as a thirty-six-room parador for overnight guests.

Baeza—less than six miles away—is also packed with Renaissance palaces organized around cobblestone squares. It's a modern, working city that owes much of its wealth to olive oil (which the locals call *oro liquido*, or liquid gold). However, many of its public works—a granary, a corn exchange, a meat market, and a prison—were designed by de Vandelvira. The architect also contributed to the Baeza cathedral and the former convent of San Francisco. A restaurant named for him is now located within the convent. Many of its dishes are infused with olive oil from the surrounding groves. Dining in both of these cities is an unmatched pleasure. Local delicacies include lamb, partridge, and pork loin strips prepared with olive oil.

Many travelers to this part of Andalucía also spend time in **Sierra de Cazorla Natural Park,** a thickly forested nature preserve that's home to wild boar and Spanish ibex, along with golden eagles that soar above limestone cliffs carved by time.

Visit SPAIN.INFO and ANDALUCIA.ORG when planning your trip to Spain.

keep you up last night? You were tossing and turning."

"It wasn't the wind," she says, pulling her chair out from the table.

I spent the rest of our days down there strolling the white beach, reading Graham Greene novels, and bodysurfing with my son. Some nights we'd all run into the little broken-down town for dinner, walking the dirt back streets, my wife taking photographs of hairless dogs staring down from barbed-wire-trimmed rooftops. Now and then, we'd run into some friend or acquaintance from a previous trip and sit in a café, sharing a beer. One blazing afternoon, we visited the ruins and climbed the temple stairs, where the dark blood of sacrificial hearts still stained the ancient stone. The issue about the "girlfriend" was dropped completely, although some undeniable lurking enmity would pop up in weird moments: an argument over the use of the word *buscando*, a little flareup about whether to leave the overhead fan running all night, squandering precious solar power. But, for the most part, we behaved decently toward each other and even held hands once or twice on our sunset walks, remembering the days we were seldom out of each other's sight and had no reason to doubt we'd be forever in love.

On the return flight, we sat four abreast, with the aisle cut between us. Our daughter and I sat as a pair. Directly behind us was the couple from St. Paul. The man had the window seat. Somewhere high above the Mississippi, he made a cluster of soft guttural moans, then went silent against the glass. The woman let out a short anguished cry and leaped up to assist her husband. I unbuckled my seat belt and went back to see if I could help. The woman lay across the man's lap clutching her white handkerchief and trying to contain the horrible rush of brown fluid that was pouring down his chest. She was weeping and kissing his forehead, which had turned as white as the handkerchief. His whole body seemed completely deflated and lay crushed against the glass as the sky raced by. She turned to me, and her face was broken with grief. All the sorrow she'd been so heroically containing came flooding out. She moved aside, and I took the man by the shoulders to pull him out into the aisle. As soon as I took hold of him I knew he was dead. I laid him down flat in the aisle, on his back. Another passenger, who said he was a doctor, knelt beside the man and unbuttoned his shirt, then began pressing and releasing his chest with his hands laid one on top of the other. I noticed a dark ruby ring on the doctor's finger with the emblem of a snake coiled around a cross. The woman kept hovering over the dead man's wide-open eyes, speaking to him softly through her sobs. Flight attendants drew the curtains across the first-class section and spread blankets with the airline's logo across the dead man's legs and torso. The doctor switched to mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, using a small plastic device inserted into the dead man's mouth. When he paused to take a break, the woman implored him not to stop. The pilot announced over the sound system that we would be making an emergency landing in St. Louis and instructed us to bring our seats to an upright position and fasten our seat belts. The plane descended and circled the city. The doctor's face now had a grim set to it, although the woman kept pleading with him to continue his efforts. As we landed, I could make out emergency life-support vehicles lining the runway with their yellow and red lights blinking.

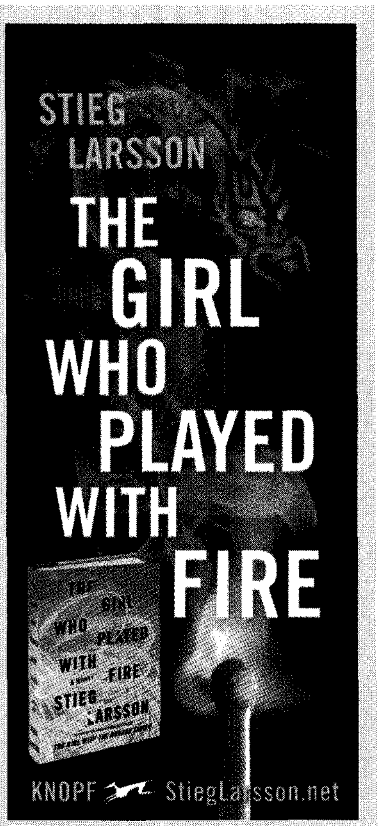
Young paramedics in blue jumpsuits entered the plane and strapped the dead man to a gurney. The wife and the doctor followed them out. From the window of the plane, I could see the dead man's body jerking spasmodically as they plugged it into the electric defibrillator. The dangling arms flapped helplessly on the black tarmac. They covered the dead man's face with the blankets. The doctor put his arm around the widow's shoulders. They took a step back from the body.

We drove in silence from the St. Paul airport. When we finally made it back to the house, the kids took off immediately to visit their friends in the neighborhood. The dogs were glad to see us. The canary flitted from one side of its cage to the other, causing its little brass bell to tinkle. The house felt cold, and we turned the thermostat up to seventy-five. We hauled our luggage up the stairs to the bedroom and dumped it on the floor. My cell phone started ringing and blinking in the middle of the bed. Right where I'd left it. ♦

ADVERTISEMENT

bookmarks

The *New Yorker* Promotion Department invites you to look for this release.

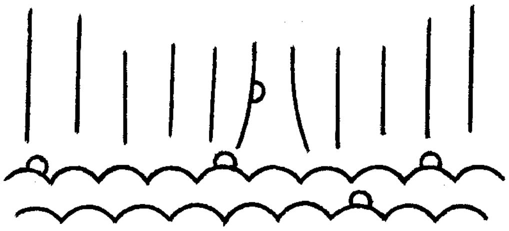


WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO SWEDEN!

Enter the Salander's Sweden Sweepstakes for a chance to win round-trip economy air transportation on Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) and passes to explore Lisbeth Salander's Stockholm. You'll also enjoy luxury accommodations for four nights in the Sheraton Stockholm Hotel. For full rules and to enter, visit **StiegLarsson.net**.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. The Sweepstakes is open to legal residents of the forty-eight contiguous United States and the District of Columbia who were at least 18 years of age on July 27, 2009. Entries must be received no later than 11:59 P.M. E.T. on September 30, 2009. LIMIT ONE ENTRY PER PERSON. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. For the official rules, go to www.StiegLarsson.net. The approximate retail value of the prize is $4,950. Sponsor of this sweepstakes is Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc., whose address is 1745 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019.

THE CRITICS



BOOKS

IT HAPPENED ONE DECADE

What the Great Depression did to culture.

BY CALEB CRAIN

"I want to find out why I'm working," Cary Grant tells Katharine Hepburn in "Holiday." Grant's character, a grocer's son who put himself through Harvard, wants to take time off from a promising business career, and Grant makes the proposal sound at once existential and lighthearted—as if he wants to investigate not because he's especially troubled or especially gifted but because this is the sort of thing human beings like to know, and he happens to have the means to try to find out. "The answer can't be just to pay bills and to pile up more money," he says. It sounds reasonable, and, though his fiancée is appalled, Hepburn, her sister, is enchanted. An heiress, she doesn't know what to be when she grows up, either. "I never could decide whether I wanted to be Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale, or John L. Lewis," Hepburn confesses.

"Holiday" was released in 1938. It might seem nervy of Hollywood to give an audience slogging through the Great Depression a story about rich people wondering how, why, or even whether they should work, but doubts about the culture of work were then widespread. Edmund Wilson, for example, was exhilarated by the downturn's discomfiture of big-business culture. "It gave us a new sense of power to find ourselves still carrying on while the bankers, for a change, were taking a beating," he wrote. A man who tried business and failed at it, E. Y. Harburg, later recalled, "When I lost my possessions, I found my creativity." Taking up songwriting, he wrote "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?," which became the era's unofficial theme song. Another of the disillusioned, Pare Lorentz, dropped out of a corporate advertising department, declaring, in 1931, "The man who starts at the bottom of a corporation to work his way up is a fool." A few years later, he was working for the government, filming luminous documentaries about the American landscape.

Not all the unemployed found careers in literature, music, and film, of course, but, even for those who didn't, the idea of choosing to do something other than make money—the idea of being like Cary Grant—was more than a rationalization or a fantasy. During the Great Depression, the word "holiday" sometimes served as a euphemism for a strike or a bank suspension, and art, whose purpose lies a step away from moneymaking even when money changes hands, offered a way of keeping work in perspective despite a desperate need for it. As Morris Dickstein writes in "Dancing in the Dark" (Norton; $29.95), a bighearted, rambling new survey of American culture in the nineteen-thirties, "The arts bound people together in a collaborative effort to interpret and alleviate their plight." They were something to turn to when faith in work seemed lost.

As dismal as the current recession is, the Great Depression puts it to shame. Unemployment today hovers just below ten per cent, but in the winter between Herbert Hoover's defeat and Franklin Roosevelt's Inauguration it reached nearly twenty-five per cent. States and cities offered some relief, but when the stock market crashed, in October, 1929, the national government was not able to cushion the blow with unemployment insurance, payments to retirees, or welfare for mothers and children; the New Deal did not create Social Security until 1935. The poor lived in city dumps, in so-called Hoovervilles, and fought over garbage thrown out by restaurants. Fewer Americans married, fewer divorced, and it's even been suggested that there was less sex. Babies became relatively rare. "I thought they'd gone out, like horse-cars," a character in a 1934 novel quips. Raised on the belief that success was available to all hardworking Americans and was almost a duty, many of the new poor blamed themselves. Shame compromised relationships and destabilized families, and anxiety left lifelong scars. Even after the Second World War, Dickstein writes, "members of the Depression generation were easy enough to recognize by their social conscience or their economic fears," including his own father, who held on to "an undying concern about security."

According to Dickstein, the misery went underreported at first. Some of the earliest accounts came from Edmund Wilson, who worried that "neither the politicians nor the intellectuals have really been hit by the depression" and toured the country in 1930 and 1931 to write about it for *The New Republic.* Wilson discovered demoralized workers driven to gassing or shooting themselves—and, in at least one case, shooting a landlord. "So far as I can see, then, Karl Marx's predictions are in process of coming true," he wrote in "The American Jitters," a 1932 collection of the articles.

Art was as slow as journalism to address the actual circumstances of the struggling poor, and one of the earliest novels to capture the Depression mood was drawn not from contemporary events but from the author's childhood in the early years of the century. In "Jews Without Money" (1930), Michael Gold wrote about a boy on the Lower East Side who taunts prostitutes for charging no more than fifty cents, and swims in the East River amid dog corpses, vege-

ABOVE: PHILIPPE WEISBECKER; OPPOS

SÉJOUR
à 20 minutes
CUNARD WHITE STAR
R.M.S. QUEEN MARY
PARIS
French Line

Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn in "Holiday" (1938). Screwball is perhaps the Depression's most distinctive creation.

"Schubert's String Trio for Musicians with Exaggerated Facial Expressions"

tables, and sewage. Veering between pastoral and yellow journalism, the novel has a crude energy, and Dickstein praises it for showing that poverty was a psychological trap as well as an economic one. "Poverty makes some people insane" is how Gold puts it. The hero's father, a housepainter, becomes so dizzy from lead poisoning that he falls off some scaffolding and breaks his feet, but though capitalism has rendered him unable to work, he refuses to support any challenge to it, for fear that he might someday have to surrender the millions he dreams of making: "I spit on a union! I do not believe in such nonsense! In America each man should make his own fortune!" His son, however, finds Communism, on the book's last page. "O workers' Revolution," Gold writes, "you brought hope to me, a lonely, suicidal boy. You are the true Messiah."

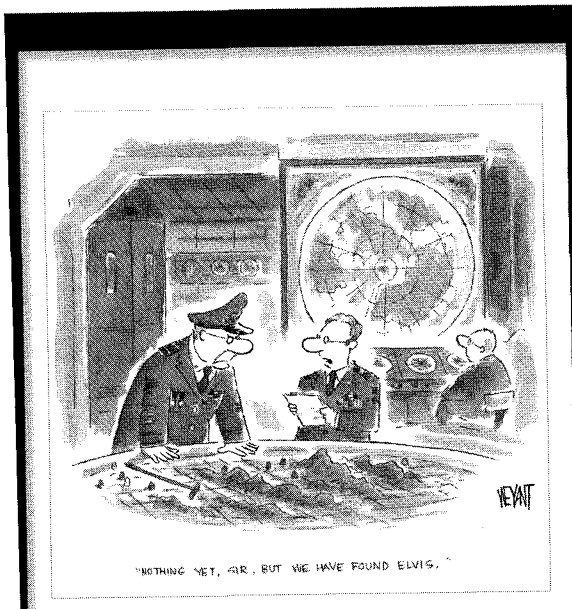
As the Communist Party encouraged the writing of proletarian novels, in the early thirties, squalid detail and dithyrambic political earnestness soon became clichés. Dickstein reports finding at least six novels about a single strike in North Carolina's cotton mills. They didn't sell well, and their tight swaddling in Party dogma disgusted later critics. In 1955, Murray Kempton complained that the genre was formulaic: "Boy sees vision of exploitation, boy goes on strike, boy finds vision of freedom." Dickstein objects that Kempton defined the genre so as to include only bad novels, and he praises Henry Roth's "Call It Sleep" (1934) for its Dickensian polyphony of voices and Proustian sensibility. Like Gold, Roth looks back to a fictional family in a Jewish ghetto, where the father's mind seems damaged by his economic failure. Roth's material, however, is transfigured by his talent as a writer. "Momma!" Gold's narrator exclaims, feverishly and a little simple-mindedly. "I must remain faithful to the poor because I cannot be faithless to you!" Roth's hero, by contrast, regards his mother, as she prepares dinner in their Brooklyn kitchen one afternoon, with a subtle sweetness:

> He was near her now. He was part of her. The rain outside the window set continual seals upon their isolation, upon their intimacy, their identity. When she lifted the stove lid, the rosy glow that stained her wide brow warmed his own body as well. He was near her. He was part of her. Oh, it was good being here. He watched her every movement hungrily.

There is no easy way to weave this kind of intimate vision into an argument about cultural politics, and, to his credit, Dickstein, whose style runs more to appreciation than to analysis, doesn't much try to. In fact, even with explicitly political writers like the playwright Clifford Odets, whose characters speak wistfully of the Soviet Union and shout "We don't want life printed on dollar bills," Dickstein reads against the political grain, preferring to discuss the intense and artful texture of Odets's language.

Toward the end of the nineteen-thirties, some writers were managing to meld their reportorial, political, and literary aims a little more smoothly. In Chicago, Richard Wright worked for the South Side Boys' Club and for the Federal Writers' Project, a government relief program, launched in 1935, which hired more than six thousand people to write state guidebooks and collect folklore and oral histories. Both experiences informed "Native Son" (1940), Wright's novel about Bigger Thomas, a young black man who accidentally suffocates a progressive-minded white woman and deliberately kills his girlfriend. Dickstein regrets Wright's fatalism but he likes such realist details as the rat that Bigger kills in the one-room apartment he shares with his mother and sister, and he appreciates Wright's attempt to communicate black alienation by choosing such a repellent hero.

Dickstein also thinks highly of John Steinbeck, an author much assigned in high-school English classes but frequently slighted by grownups. (That anyone need take Steinbeck seriously as literature, the critic Robert Warshow once grumbled, was evidence of the "organized mass disingenuousness" and "disastrous vulgarization of intellectual life" caused by the emphasis on politics in literature in the nineteen-thirties.) Dickstein shows how Steinbeck's empathy for the Joads, the family of displaced farmers in "The Grapes of Wrath" (1939), grew out of the reporting he did on the hunger and filth in California migrants' camps. As in Wright's case, the New Deal had a hand in Steinbeck's nonfiction efforts; he went to the camps partly at the request of the Farm Security Administration, a federal program that supported migrant and tenant farmers. A photograph by the F.S.A.'s Dorothea Lange appears on the cover of a 1938 pamphlet of Steinbeck's journalism. In it, a migrant worker is nursing


"NOTHING YET, SIR, BUT WE HAVE FOUND ELVIS."

OWN THE ORIGINAL

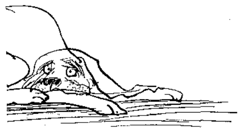
"Nothing yet, sir, but we have found Elvis."
by Christopher Weyant
Issue date: December 10, 2001
Trim size: 11" x 14"
Pen, ink, and wash on two-ply paper,
hand-captioned and signed.
Archival framing available.

You can view our entire collection of original cover and cartoon art online at
newyorkerstore.com

To arrange for a personal viewing, please call our original-art-consultant, Sarah Walker-Martin, at
(212) 630-2714
or e-mail Sarah_Walker-Martin@condenast.com.

The New Yorker Store
newyorkerstore.com
1-877-408-4269

he novel's closing scene.
e as a general salvation for
because the masses have
not even as consumers.
nchallenging labor and
ment, "nothing can ever
h to make taut their slack
es," West writes. "They
d and betrayed." He fears
te they have left is for vi-
is dismay came in a de-
sm was gaining strength
n, at home, the Catholic
y Father Coughlin was
ish influence, dropping
ts and dictators, and pa-
lag-waving, armband-
uard. Yet it is unfair of
ı culture against low, so
lisadvantage of the latter.
e, was enormously con-
ression and its politics—
ven managed to be self-
em. In Preston Sturges's
ls" (1942), Joel McCrea
who thinks he should
l epic instead of a sequel
Pants of 1939," his re-
ie musical. "I wanted to
ing outstanding," Mc-
ducers, "something you
, something that would
ialities of film as the so-
istic medium that it is.
ı it." He then lights out
n-era America with ten
cet, a mobile home of
ndlers trailing behind.
nts in Your Pants of
bt a reference to the ac-
ers of 1933," a Busby
that was no less perti-
cal moment. It opened
gers singing "We're in
le dressed in a paro-
fit adorned with giant
by turning an F.D.R.
ut "the forgotten man
he economic pyramid"
oria of ragged veterans
the women who love
ly but not quite con-
ein compares Berkeley's choreography to Leni Riefenstahl's.)



The Depression-era writer who thought most—and felt guiltiest—about what it meant to make art out of suffering was probably James Agee. In "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men" (1941), his book-length essay about three families of tenant farmers in Alabama, illustrated with photographs taken by the F.S.A.'s Walker Evans, Agee seems sickened by his freedom to write about the unhappiness of others. When, for example, in the course of his reporting, Agee inadvertently startles a young black couple by walking up behind them, he writes that "the least I could have done was to throw myself flat on my face and embrace and kiss their feet." A sort of trespassing is involved in writing about other people, even when the writing is as gentle as one can manage, just as it's a violation, however mild, to photograph a person, even though it's in an artist's nature to want to capture experience. Dickstein writes that Agee "takes full account—too full, some would say—of the relation of the observer to the thing observed." Agee's prose becomes contorted by desire and guilt, as if he were trying simultaneously to trespass and to atone for trespassing. He repeatedly disavows literary ambition. "If I could do it, I'd do no writing at all here," he writes. "It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odors, plates of food and of excrement." But the longing to surpass words leads him, paradoxically, to a highly self-conscious style that is anything but matter-of-fact. Whereas Evans's photographs sit calmly at the front of the book, arranged so that portraits of family members appear beside one another, Agee's text is hectic. He complicates it with lists and facsimiles; qualifies it with footnotes whose tone of earnest overelaboration brings to mind David Foster Wallace; redescribes in first person a scene that he has already described largely in third person; and breaks a meditation on the problem of representation into pieces, which he then scatters throughout the book. With fond exasperation, Dickstein calls the baroque structure "confusing, even sophomoric," and writes of a particularly gooey passage, "Were I not so moved by it, I'd be tempted to dismiss this as self-indulgent prose poetry."

As an example of what Agee was

trying to avoid, Dickstein points to "You Have Seen Their Faces" (1937), a collaboration between the novelist Erskine Caldwell and the photographer Margaret Bourke-White that also depicted tenant farmers in the South. Bourke-White lay in wait for her subjects with a flash, and wrote with pleasure of having them "imprisoned on a sheet of film before they knew what had happened." The resulting portraits are by turns sentimental and grotesque, and she and Caldwell printed them with contrived first-person captions. A few samples: "I reckon I forgot to remember how old I is"; "Little brother began shriveling up eleven years ago"; "Snuff is an almighty help when your teeth ache." The skin crawls. Agee, from the South himself, incorporates a few words of dialect into a description of cotton cultivation but doesn't allow himself to render his subjects' speech at any length until the book's last hundred pages, by which point he has convinced the reader of his love for them.

In the most famous scene of "Sullivan's Travels," McCrea's character recovers faith in creative work when, as a prisoner in a chain gang, he finds himself laughing at a Walt Disney cartoon of Pluto tangling with flypaper. Dickstein, too, values the popular culture of the Depression, and writes with enthusiasm about Cole Porter's wit, George Gershwin's jazz cadences, and the racing stripes and shiny surfaces of Art Deco. "A culture's forms of escape, if they can be called escape, are as significant and revealing as its social criticism," he writes. His catholicity is to some extent a reflection of the era itself, when many of the arts expanded their audiences. Virgil Thomson composed scores for two of Pare Lorentz's government documentaries, and Aaron Copland wrote one for a Hollywood film. Sponsored by F.D.R.'s Works Progress Administration, painters created murals that aimed to speak to local communities. Radio and swing bands brought jazz to new listeners. Synchronized sound, still a relatively recent addition to film, strengthened film's appeal by allowing for more and more sophisticated experiments with music and dance.

Dickstein suggests that the dance movies of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, in particular, restored feelings of mobility and elegance, which poverty had robbed people of, and he thinks that gangster movies starring James Cagney and Edward G. Robinson delivered a comeuppance to myths of the American dream and of the self-made man that had come to feel like reproaches. The decade's most distinctive creation, however, may be the screwball comedy. Frank Capra is sometimes said to have invented the genre with "It Happened One Night" (1934), in which Claudette Colbert plays an heiress on the lam from her disapproving father, Clark Gable plays a drunk reporter in need of a scoop, and she takes his seat on the bus to New York. Combative dialogue is the genre's hallmark. When a washed-out bridge stops the bus for the night, Gable reserves a cabin for himself and Colbert, who have begun a distrustful coöperation. "I registered as mister and missus," he explains.

"Oh, you did?"

"Mm-hmm."

"Well, what am I expected to do? Leap for joy?"

"Well, I kind of half expected you to thank me."

"Your ego is absolutely colossal."

"Yeah, yeah, not bad. How's yours?"

This stichomythia, Dickstein suggests, came from applying the hardboiled style of crime stories to the softhearted subject matter of a couple falling in love. An adversarial style may have felt appropriate in a romantic context at the time. Unemployment not only placed stress on couples by forcing them to go without; it also deprived the man, the traditional provider, of his power and authority. The novelist Tess Slesinger wrote in 1934 that where women "once fought their men because the men were stronger, now they seemed sworn to continue the fight in bitterness because the men were weaker." Slesinger may slant the case too strongly in the feminist direction; the real problem was probably equality. Without an established hierarchy within a couple, nothing but a fight could determine who was in charge.

Seen in this light, screwball banter is almost as much an instance of the documentary impulse of the thirties as Agee's catalogue of the insects at work on him one night in a tenant farmer's shack (bedbugs, fleas, and "small gray translucent brittle insects which I suppose were lice"). The classic Depression argument about art was between those who regretted its compromise by politics and those who regretted its failure to take politics into account—between those who cried "agitprop" and those who cried "escapism." Seven decades later, this distinction no longer seems the most telling one. "Sullivan's Travels" defended escapism, but it had vermin, just as Agee did. McCrea twitches on a Hooverville pallet, to the amusement of Veronica Lake—until she's bitten, too.

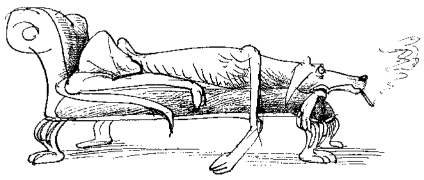
However honest screwball comedies may be about struggle, the thing one notices now is that the strugglers always seem to be flitting an inch or two above the earth that normal people tread on. The start of Gregory La Cava's "My Man Godfrey" (1936) shows bums living in a Hooverville on Manhattan's East River, but they take leave of one another with "*Bonsoir*." This is comic and fanciful, but its purpose is to underscore the same truths that Agee was pursuing: these are people, not just types. When a high-society scavenger hunt leads Carole Lombard to the dump in search of a "Forgotten Man," she falls in love with the one she finds, played by William Powell. "I've decided I don't want to play any more games with human beings as objects," she nobly declares, as evidence of her passion. The movie she's in, however, continues to play games with human beings for another hour and a half.

Is that immoral? The movie's answer to that question is to ask another: Would it be more moral not to? After Powell's character is set on the path to economic recovery, he comes up with a scheme to employ the men he got to know in the dump, and a friend gently hints that he needn't remain loyal to them: "After all, things have always been this way for some people. These men are not your responsibility." "There are different ways of having fun," Powell answers, a little self-deprecatingly, as if he's warding off an imputation of moral seriousness and needs his friend's indulgence. This nonchalance is what artists had to pull off during the Depression. They had to keep company with misery without adopting it as their purpose. With charm and cunning, they had to come up with different ways of having fun. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

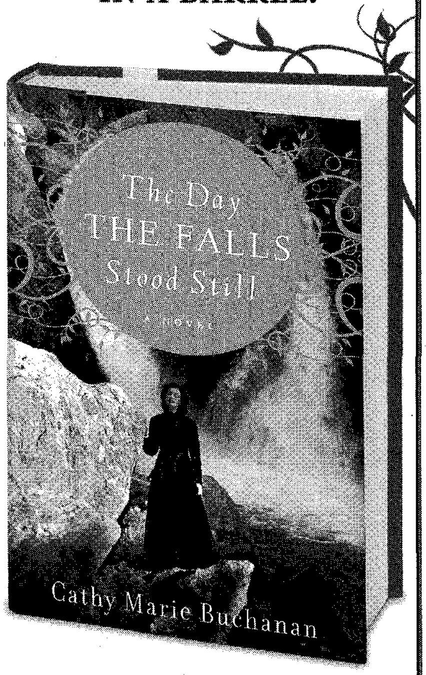
Her Fearful Symmetry, *by Audrey Niffenegger (Scribner; $26.99).* The endurance of love animates this gothic story set in and around Highgate Cemetery, in London. When Elspeth Noblin dies of cancer, she leaves her estate, including an apartment overlooking the graveyard, to the twin daughters of her twin sister, from whom she has been estranged for twenty years. When Valentina and Julia show up to claim their inheritance, they soon discover that Elspeth is still in residence, in ghostly form. Niffenegger's writing can be wearyingly overblown, but she has a knack for taking the romantic into the realm of creepiness, and she constructs a taut mystery around the secrets to be found in Elspeth's diaries and the lengths to which she will go to reunite with her younger lover. It's no small achievement that the revelations are both organic and completely unexpected.

The Anthologist, *by Nicholson Baker (Simon & Schuster; $25).* Paul Chowder is a free-verse poet of some repute who has compiled an anthology titled "Only Rhyme" but can't manage to bang out the introduction. His struggle has sent his girlfriend, Roz, packing, and we can see why he's no fun to live with. On the page, though, he's an erudite, unpretentious, and often hilarious companion who mentions Ludacris in the same line as Kipling, and who compares anthologists to "that blond bitch-goddess on 'Project Runway.' " While Paul's peregrinations, which recall Baker's "U and I" but with poetry on the pedestal instead of Updike, are a textbook case of avoidance, they are also an earnest exploration of poetic rhythm and what it has to do with baby talk, music, crossword puzzles—and his longing for Roz. "Only Rhyme" began with Paul's impulse to collect, but it ends up meaning "Only connect."



No Quarter, *by Richard Slotkin (Random House; $28).* In July, 1864, after the Battle of the Crater, Ulysses S. Grant wrote to his chief of staff, "It was the saddest affair I have witnessed in this war." The sadness had many aspects: the squandered effort to dig a mine, packed with gunpowder, under enemy lines; drunken, incompetent Union officers; rookie black units thrown into battle, to be slaughtered by Confederates determined to take no black prisoners. Most horribly, some white Union troops, driven by fear of Southern retribution and their own racism, attacked the black troops on their own side. The gaping pit left when the mine exploded became the scene of a race riot. Slotkin is aware of the great lack in his otherwise interesting book: the voices of the black soldiers, whose perspectives, unlike those of the whites on both sides, are not detailed in letters or regimental histories. The battlefield is now "a hollow in the grassy slope," dotted with memorials—none of them to the black troops who died there.

The Music Room, *by William Fiennes (Norton; $24.95).* This sublimely evocative memoir details the author's experience of growing up in a fourteenth-century moated castle in Oxfordshire. The medieval structure turned Tudor stately home once employed fourteen gardeners, and has a "groined passage" and rooms that were slept in by kings and queens, but the drama of the place is overshadowed by the story of Fiennes's older brother Richard, afflicted with severe epilepsy from a young age. Richard's seizures leave him disoriented, "downput," and, eventually, so violent that he must be institutionalized, but in his stable moments he is charming and charismatic. Fiennes's account of his childhood is interwoven with passages about science's evolving understanding of epilepsy, which provide a clinical counterpoint to the emotional, elegiac narrative of a family living "in a country of undamaged brains," from which one member is "forever excluded."



SOMETIMES,
FALLING IN LOVE
IS LIKE GOING OVER
NIAGARA
IN A BARREL.

The story of an independent woman ahead of her time, *The Day the Falls Stood Still* captures a tumultuous era of families, life, and love...on the precipice of a new age. Inspired by historical events at Niagara Falls.

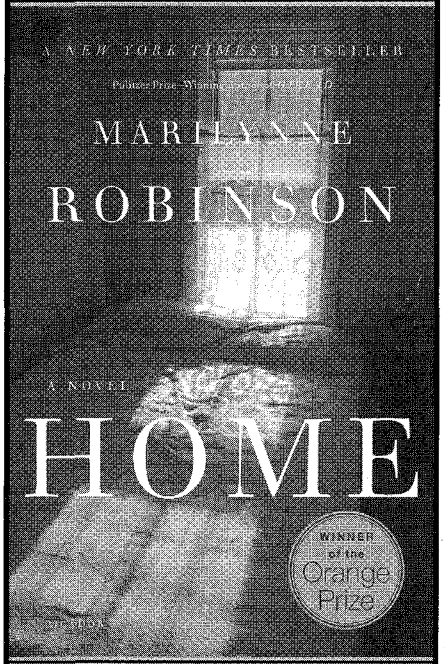
"Buchanan weaves Niagara Falls' history and her storytelling together masterfully, and no loose end is left untied. Everything that happens early on comes back saliently at the tragic and inspirational end." — *Elle*

MORE THAN 100,000 COPIES IN PRINT

voice

EveryWomansVoice.com | Also available on ebook

NOW IN PAPERBACK
FROM
THE PULITZER
PRIZE-WINNING
AUTHOR OF
GILEAD


A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
Pulitzer Prize–Winning Author of GILEAD
MARILYNNE
ROBINSON
A NOVEL
HOME
WINNER of the Orange Prize

WINNER OF THE
ORANGE PRIZE

“BEAUTIFUL.”
–*The New York Times Book Review*

“POWERFUL.”
–*The New Yorker*

“REMARKABLE.”
–*The New York Review of Books*

“PRAYERFUL.”
–*Chicago Sun-Times*

“RESONANT.”
–*Los Angeles Times*

PICADOR

PICADORUSA.COM

THE ART WORLD

DUTCH TOUCH

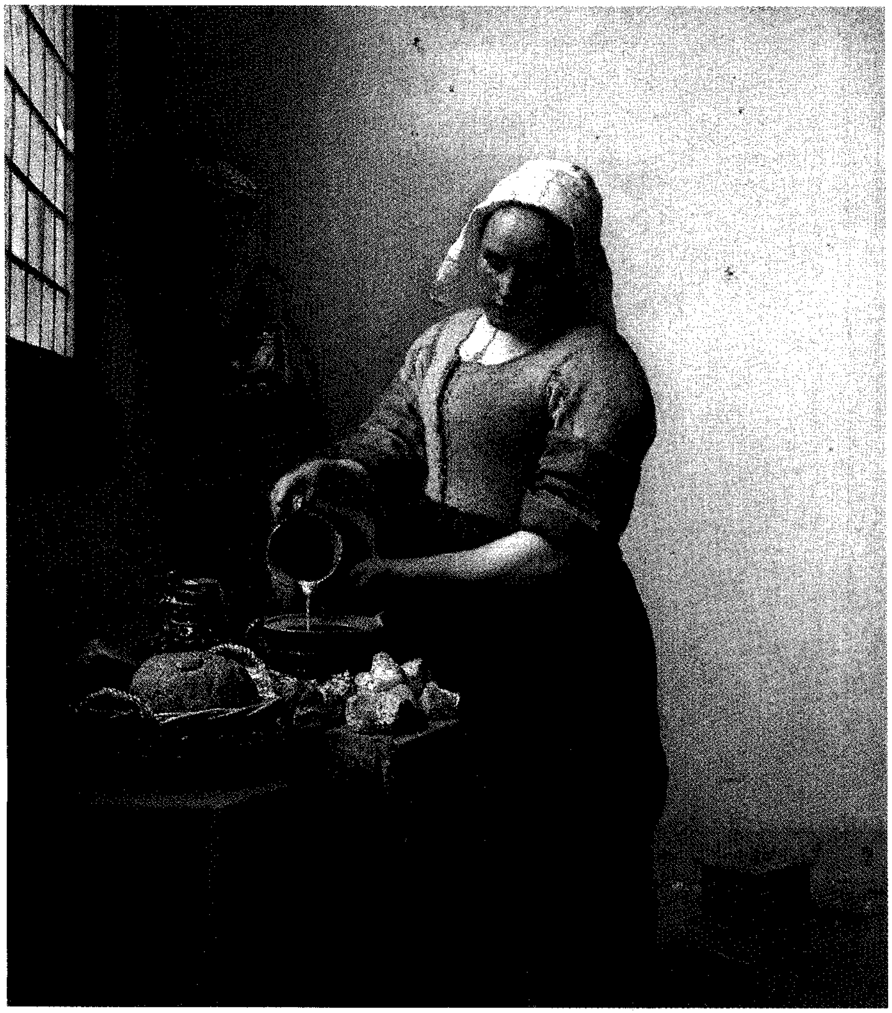
A visiting Vermeer at the Met.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

A useful myth of aesthetic experience took shape when, in “À la Recherche du Temps Perdu,” the ailing writer Bergotte weighed the value of his life against that of a “little patch of yellow wall, with a sloping roof,” in Johannes Vermeer’s “View of Delft” (c. 1660-61), and then, with a fleeting thought that undercooked potatoes at lunch were causing him indigestion, fell dead of a heart attack. The “little patch” filled Bergotte with remorse for his “too dry” writing style, which had not risked such gorgeous emphases. Anyone who pays openhearted attention to very good art (dying is optional) may have had similar emotions. Beauty of the sort that Proust dramatizes is a wordless sermon, urging our betterment. As usual with Proust, the passage—written after he had left his own sickroom in Paris, in 1921, to attend a show of Dutch art that included “View of Delft”—suspends profundity and triviality in a sort of vapor, which we breathe as we read. It happens to be erroneous. There is no yellow wall under a sloping roof in Vermeer’s cityscape. (There is a yellow sloping roof.) Scholars have earnestly debated what Bergotte saw, failing to consider that, like the rest of us, Proust had a lousy memory. But by keying his account of Bergotte’s passion to a Vermeer, Proust installed a milestone of art criticism, displacing Raphael as Europe’s cynosure of artistic perfection.

“Vermeer’s Masterpiece ‘The Milkmaid,’ ” a tiny show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, sets an example for recession-era museum practice. A single guest diva, “The Milkmaid” (c. 1657-58), from the Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam, heads a cast of local talent: the museum’s own five Vermeers and related works from the Dutch Golden Age. “View of Delft” isn’t present, remaining, like “Girl with a Pearl Earring,” at the Mauritshuis, in The Hague. “Delft” doesn’t do a lot for me, anyway. It is so bizarrely special—a fairyland city persuasively identical to an actual city—that I have mainly gawked at it, lacking whatever Bergottean itch it scratches. But a little patch of lapis-lazuli-tinted white, describing backlit linen in the head scarf of the Met’s “Young Woman with a Water Pitcher,” would have killed me a long time ago, if paint could. The young woman is a serene bourgeoise at her morning toilette, easing open a leaded gate window. The entering sunlight sustains all manner of ravishing adventures, throughout the picture, but the incidental detail of the head scarf has affected me like a life-changing secret, whispered to me alone. I revel in it each time I see it—having misremembered it, of course, since the last time, helpless to retain the nuance of the color and the velleity of the painter’s touch. “Young Woman with a Water Pitcher” is a Sermon on the Mount of aesthetic value, in which the meek—or, at least, the humdrum, involving trifles of a prosperous but ordinary household, on an ordinary day—inherit the earth. Beholding it, I feel that my usual ways of looking are torpid to the point of dishonoring the world. At the same time, I know that my emotion is manipulated by deliberate artifice. An artist has contrived to lure me out of myself into an illusion of reality more fulfilling than any lived reality can be.

That work is one of the dozen or so home runs among Vermeer’s thirty-six authenticated paintings. (Three in the Met’s collection are among those that fall short: the age-muddied “Woman with a Lute,” the goofily winsome “Study of a Young Woman,” and the jaw-droppingly weird “Allegory of the Catholic Faith.”) The effort to rival his best works, which was out of the question for anyone else, must have tormented Vermeer, whose self-generated standards demanded a labor-intensiveness scarcely convenient for a father of eleven, working in the middling genre of domestic interiors. Most of his Dutch peers averaged fifty or so pictures a year; Vermeer clocked in with two or three—although they sold at the top of the market. When luxury commerce collapsed, after the French invasion of the Netherlands, in 1672, Vermeer appears to have stopped painting. He died three years later, at the age of forty-three, perhaps of a stroke.



"The Milkmaid" (c. 1657-58), on rare loan from the Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam.

"The Milkmaid"—a diminutive picture, just eighteen inches high by about sixteen wide—is another of the elect, though it's a mite less absorbing, for me, than the more mature "Young Woman with a Water Pitcher." Like "Delft," "The Milkmaid" exercises more dazzling virtuosity than I quite know what to do with. Sensational colors, in particular, strain the scene of a husky young servant pouring milk, in a careful dribble, from an earthenware pitcher into an earthenware bowl on an odd-shaped table laden with a wicker basket, a loaf and fragments of crusty bread, and a stoneware beer jug. (She may be making bread pudding.) She wears a white linen cap, a yellow woollen jacket with green work sleeves, a red skirt, and an apron of a stunningly sumptuous blue. The hues jump out from the painting's miraculous rendering of soft sunlight from a bleared window with a small broken pane that reveals the full brightness of the day. The light spills in a static wave of modulated tones across the dilapidated walls of an apparently rather dank room; the odd stain or nail hole in a wall can grab your eye and not immediately let it go. A boxy foot warmer on the floor calls attention to small baseboard ceramic tiles, one of which, with a blue cartoon of Cupid, may drop a certain hint.

In a richly informative catalogue essay, the Met's curator of European paintings, Walter Liedtke, makes much of the work's possible erotic content, as it is of a time, in the Netherlands, marked by a "reputation of kitchen maids and especially milkmaids for sexual availability." Liedtke presses the point by augmenting the show, which he organized, with overtly suggestive works, including a big painting by Peter Wtewael, "Kitchen Scene," from the sixteen-twenties, in which the gestures of a jolly maid and a smirky lad, delivering foodstuffs, are laugh-out-loud lewd. The museum's haunting "Maid Asleep," which Vermeer made in the same period as "The Milkmaid," supports the theme, mildly. A girl drowses at a table, stocked with wine and beer, next to an open door, through which a male guest may have departed. (Vermeer painted a man in that space and then painted him out.) Liedtke argues that the common viewer of the time (invariably male, it seems) would have registered an implicit tease in "The Milkmaid." I wonder. We have come a long way, lately, from a once de-rigueur prudery among art historians. We may go too far. The sturdy dignity of the maid forfends even a notion of prurience. The majesty of her presentation—with sculptural mass in a monumentally composed and compressed, wide-angle view—would stand me off, in an attitude of reverence, even if she were naked.

Vermeer was about twenty-five when he painted "The Milkmaid." That's hard to deal with. What made him so precocious? I hazard that it was the locomotive logic of a simple stylistic idea: to recast conventional genre painting in the terms of a perceptual realism as thoroughgoing as the medium allowed. The conviction of reality that flooded his canvases extended from subtleties of light to significations of character. Loyalty to his technique drew from the artist an approximation of humane wisdom that was probably far beyond his personal capacity, as a young man. This occurs with all sufficiently disciplined creative endeavors—klutzes in life transfigured as seraphim in their work—but seldom so sublimely. Liedtke nails the effect as regards art history: "Something well worn in Dutch art (like an old shoe) has become something never seen before (like a glass slipper)." That's beauty in action, of the precise variety that Proust memorialized: not a transport to some exalted realm but an abrupt recognition that the finest crystallizations of sensibility may readily befall us, in the matter-of-fact decisions of resolute artists, if we will abide their chastening force. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM
Audio: Peter Schjeldahl on the fall season.

THE CURRENT CINEMA

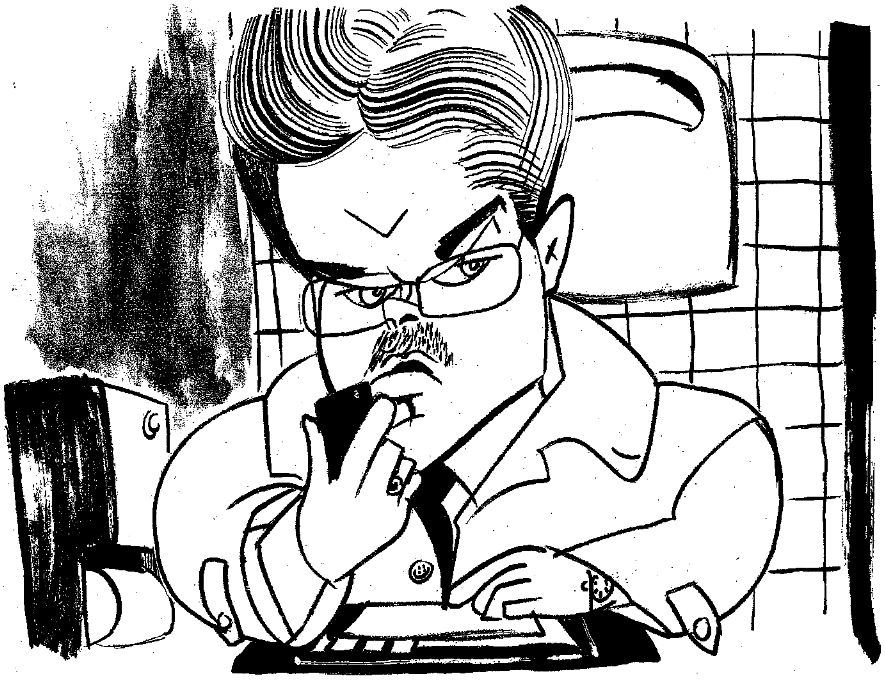
YOUNG ROMANTICS

"The Informant!" and "Bright Star."

BY DAVID DENBY

In Steven Soderbergh's "The Informant!," Matt Damon plays a corporate whistle-blower who almost swallows the whistle. Mark Whitacre (Damon) seems the epitome of Midwestern square. He wears a hairpiece that he must imagine makes him look virile—an overabundant pompadour. Damon gained thirty pounds for the role, and he's paunchy and round-faced, with a mustache and steel-rimmed glasses. This man is the hero, or perhaps the antihero, of a true story, as reported by Kurt Eichenwald in his 2000 book of the same title (although unadorned by exclamation point). The movie opens in 1992, when Whitacre is the young president of the bio-products division at the agribusiness giant Archer Daniels Midland. He appears to be outraged that A.D.M. is fixing prices with its Japanese competitors for lysine—an amino acid that goes into the corn-based foods that fill the aisles of American supermarkets. At dinner, he stares at his corn-fed chicken and pumped-up shrimp in disgust. Does he feel guilty about what he's doing to the American diet? About the inflation of prices? He says so, but he's in on the fix, and the F.B.I., which has been tapping his telephone, is puzzled by him. In any case, Whitacre, naïvely excited, agrees to wear a wire to meetings with his superiors and colleagues. He turns into a foolish risk-taker, a kind of electrified dork who narrates into a tape recorder a stunningly undramatic entrance into the corporate headquarters, in Decatur, Illinois. He even fiddles with the balky machine while company executives sit all around him. He thinks that he's invulnerable, like his idol, Tom Cruise, in "The Firm." Somehow, no one at A.D.M. catches on to him, and he gets results. But, by degrees, almost everything he says begins to sound false. One lie encases another, and another. After five years, the Justice Department, having received hundreds of Whitacre's tapes, finds itself committed to a major price-fixing case against A.D.M., based on incriminating information sneaked to it by a man less reliable than a carnival barker. The government is stuck with him, and so are we, since we've earlier paid him respect and credit.

"The Informant!" is a return to form for Soderbergh, who couldn't seem to put anything resembling an emotional charge into his recent films—the interminable, depressive "Che," with Benicio Del Toro staring mournfully into the jungle, and the inert "The Girlfriend Experience," in which the porn actress Sasha Grey was so wrapped in egotism that she forgot to give a performance. This time, Soderbergh is in full control, and his star is on fire. Usually chary of words, Damon here is as voluble as a travelling salesman at a hotel bar, and he holds nothing back, never distancing himself from Whitacre's eager, schmucky side, which, given Damon's natural charm, is almost endearing, at first. The screenwriter, Scott Z. Burns, trying to shed light on Whitacre's inner life, creates antic voice-over monologues for him. In the midst of an ordinary task, Whitacre will suddenly, and without cause, take off into bizarrely detailed ruminations—most strangely, one about the inappropriateness of Japanese men in suits buying used girls' panties on the street. Highly inappropriate, he insists. He seems like a moral fellow with vagrant thoughts and judgments—a little crazy, perhaps, but, then, who doesn't have intricate flights of fancy or indignation while standing at a checkout line or walking across a parking lot? We get the sense of an indiscriminate intellectual curiosity that can't be contained by the routines of the workday.



Matt Damon as a whistle-blower in Steven Soderbergh's new movie.

TOM BACHTELL

When Whitacre is revealed as a liar, we're shocked, and Soderbergh, moving swiftly and surely through short scenes, keeps the style ambiguous—lodged somewhere between thriller and farce. This is a full-scale production, with locations all over the globe, yet it's also an aggressively perverse joke. Soderbergh gets as far away as possible from the earnest, anguished tone of Michael Mann's "The Insider," in which Russell Crowe gave an angry performance as a tobacco executive who, having spilled the goods on his company, fears for his family's safety. By contrast, nothing in "The Informant!" is quite straight. Many of the actors (including Tom Wilson, Joel McHale, and

Tom Papa) are standup comics, and they give their lines slightly ironic inflections—a pause, a smile, a tic—that knock the scenes off kilter, or, at least, away from melodrama.

Lysine and price-fixing are the MacGuffins here; they're not really what the movie is about. "The Informant!" turns out to be a comedy devoted to a series of conundrums. Among many other things, why in the world does Whitacre get exercised about price-fixing when he's a man of dubious honesty himself? After each of his whoppers is exposed, he wins our trust again—we want to believe in him—then promptly loses it once more. By the end, Soderbergh's movie subverts common belief far more effectively than some of the fantasy movies knocking around this summer. It's a vertiginous experience that grows increasingly hilarious, and the joke is on us.

In Jane Campion's "Bright Star," a half-educated but boldly self-possessed and talented beauty named Fanny Brawne (Abbie Cornish) captures first the admiration and then the love of a tubercular young man (Ben Whishaw), who spends his days sitting with a friend in a darkened room in his house in London or wandering Hampstead Heath in a seeming trance. He's a most unpromising fellow: sometimes spirited and funny, but often sunk in quiet and apparently unproductive melancholy. It is 1818, and the young man, John Keats, will die in a few years, at the age of twenty-five, and soon afterward become known, despite much criticism of his work, as one of the greatest English poets since Shakespeare and Milton. Campion doesn't play up the irony that few of her characters have any notion of who the young man is. The movie is not the kind of portentous biopic in which history, like some sort of hooded eagle, perches on the shoulders of every scene, waiting to soar. Campion, who wrote the script as well as directed, keeps the action day-by-day, small-scale, and casually lyrical. The tale of the love affair (chaste, in this version) is told from Fanny's point of view. At first, she hardly understands poetry. An expert dressmaker and a prodigious flirt, she tries to fake her way through a kind of exam administered by Charles Brown (Paul Schneider), Keats's protector and amanuensis. Brown is a self-hating buffoon who nevertheless has a perfect ear for Keats's work; he sees Fanny as an ignorant girl who will trap the poet in the soul-destroying vulgarity of sexual pleasure. At the same time, Fanny's mother regards Keats as charming but remarkably impecunious—an unsuitable match for her daughter. In some ways, "Bright Star" is a conventional tale of frustrated young love.

The stern elders relent, and Keats and Fanny spend much time together—kissing and canoodling like any other young pair but also reciting, back and forth, some of Keats's poetry, almost as if it were the stuff of everyday conversation. Fanny becomes both muse and sounding board, and Abbie Cornish, eyes widening, breasts partly bared, is a luscious ideal. Many of Whishaw and Cornish's scenes together have a high-spirited delicacy that borders on the precious but then pulls back. For instance, Whishaw speaks some of the poems as if he were not quite sure that he had the right to impose them on other people's attention. In this interpretation, Keats is still a brilliant boy, his genius constrained by shyness and chagrin. Campion makes only one serious mistake: when Whishaw recites the lines "Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast, / To feel for ever its soft fall and swell," he actually rests his head on Cornish's chest. The literalness borders on the laughable, and you wonder, disconcertingly, how these two relieve what look like unbearable states of arousal. In general, though, Campion handles as well as any director has the impossible task of fitting poetry into everyday life. Keats speaks plainly and vigorously much of the time, but he also slips into metaphor and eloquence as easily as the rest of us slip into banality. In "Bright Star," he is, convincingly, a great dying poet. What makes the movie extraordinary, however, is not so much the portrait of a poet as the accuracy and the detail of the period re-creation. Indoors, a whitish light from the windows half-illuminates rooms. There's a full complement of geese and mud and some women in bonnets, but Campion avoids finery and ceremony. She doesn't show off the period; she triumphantly makes it a time in which people live as best they can. A few outdoor scenes are set in dry fields, but there are summer moments, too, of spectacular lavender flowers and innumerable butterflies. I don't think it's mere sentiment to demonstrate that the author of the odes and sonnets, though miserable, obscure, and disappointed, lived, at times, in scenes of the most intense beauty. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

The Front Row, a blog about movies.

THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC. COPYRIGHT ©2009 CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

VOLUME LXXXV, NO. 29, September 21, 2009. THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: February 9 & 16, June 8 & 15, July 6 & 13, August 10 & 17, and December 21 & 28) by Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Elizabeth Hughes, vice-president and publisher; Beth Lusko, associate publisher advertising; Anjali Saigal, associate publisher marketing services; James Guilfoyle, director of finance and business operations; Lynn Oberlander, general counsel. Condé Nast Publications: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, president and C.E.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.O.O.; Jennifer Graham, senior vice-president-finance; Jill Bright, executive vice-president/human resources. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001. Canada Post: return undeliverable Canadian addresses to P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684, call (800) 825-2510, or e-mail subscriptions@newyorker.com. Please give both new and old addresses as printed on most recent label. Subscribers: If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. If during your subscription term or up to one year after the magazine becomes undeliverable, you are ever dissatisfied with your subscription, let us know. You will receive a full refund on all unmailed issues. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks after receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Terese Cunningham at (212) 286-2105. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, www.newyorker.com. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail covers@cartoonbank.com. For permissions and reprint requests, please call (212) 630-5656 or fax requests to (212) 630-5883. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online at www.newyorker.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines, visit www.condenet.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

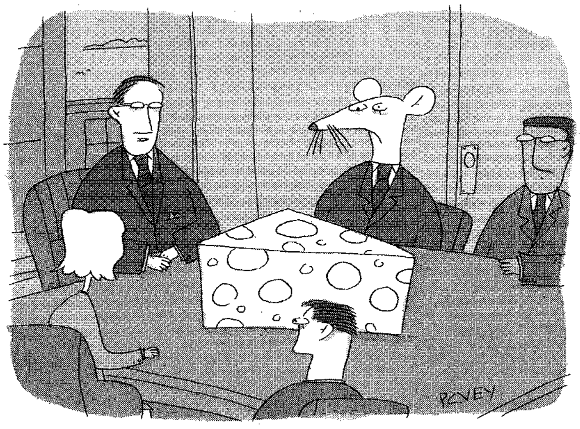
THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS MAGAZINE

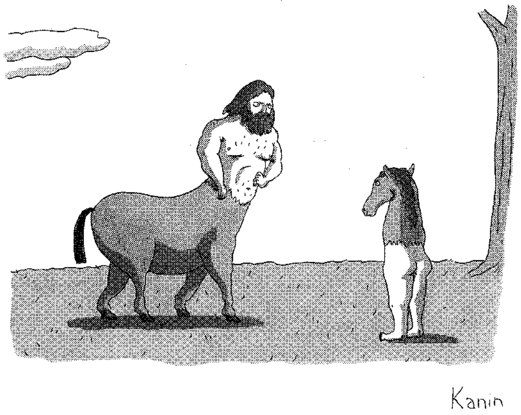
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Drew Dernavich, must be received by Sunday, September 20th. The finalists in the September 7th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the October 5th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the U.S. or Canada (except Quebec) age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"Now, I know some of you might be thinking, Is this a trap?"
Patrick Kraft, Chicago, Ill.



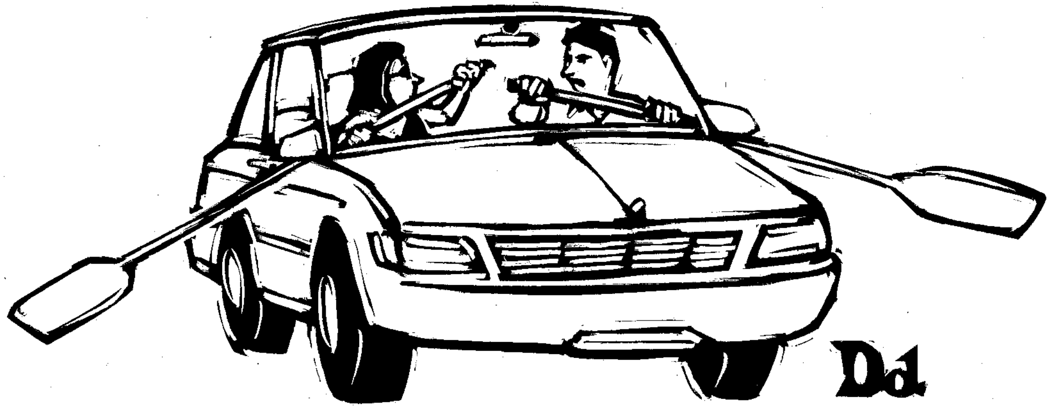
THE FINALISTS

"You're just like your mother."
Hugh Simmons, Brooklyn, N.Y.

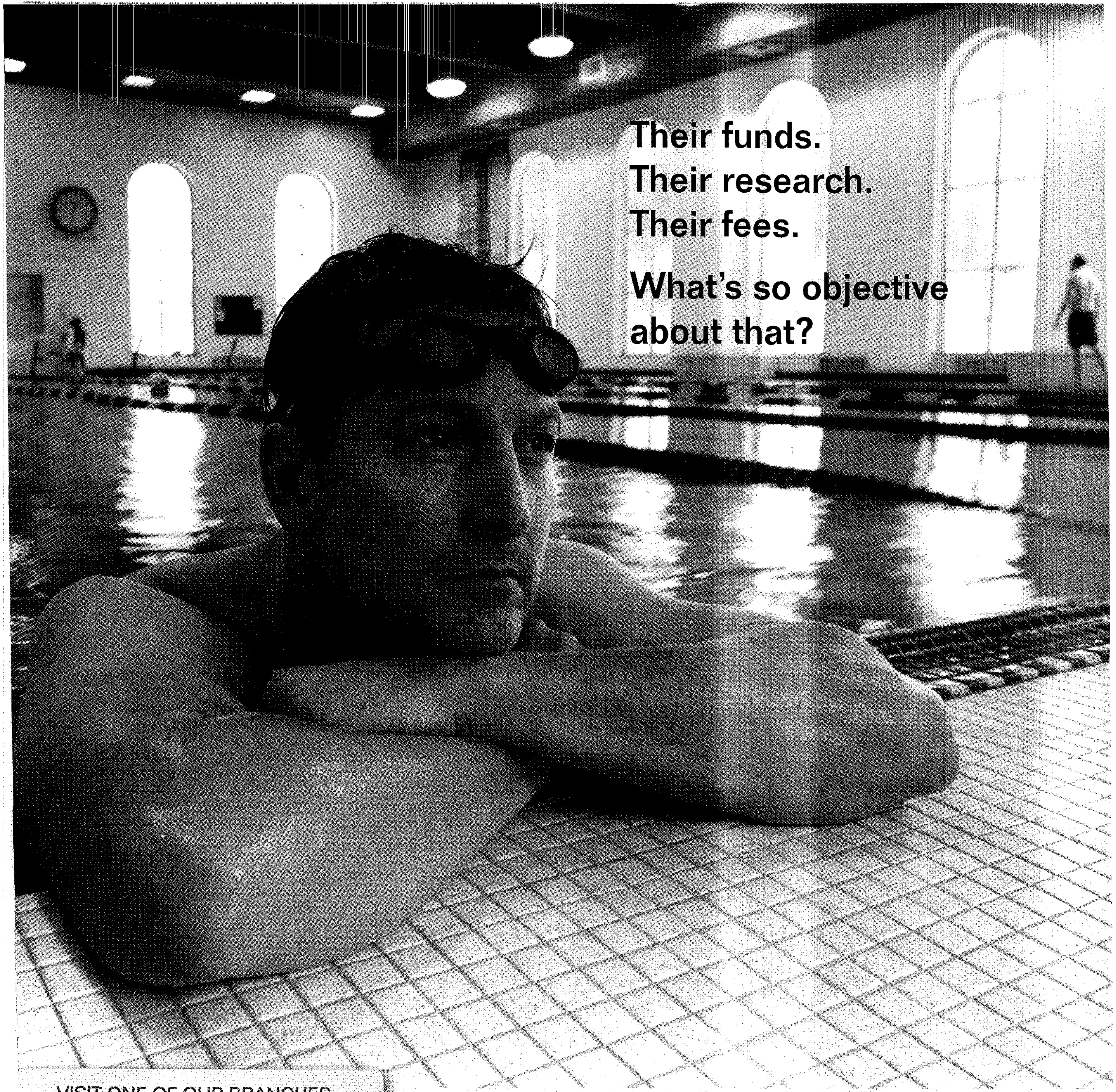
"So this is how the other half lives."
Ryan Kelsey, Jersey City, N.J.

"You look ridiculous."
Samuel A. Hamilton, New York City

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



“ ”


Their funds.
Their research.
Their fees.
What's so objective about that?

VISIT ONE OF OUR BRANCHES FOR A FREE IN-PERSON RETIREMENT PLAN CHECKUP

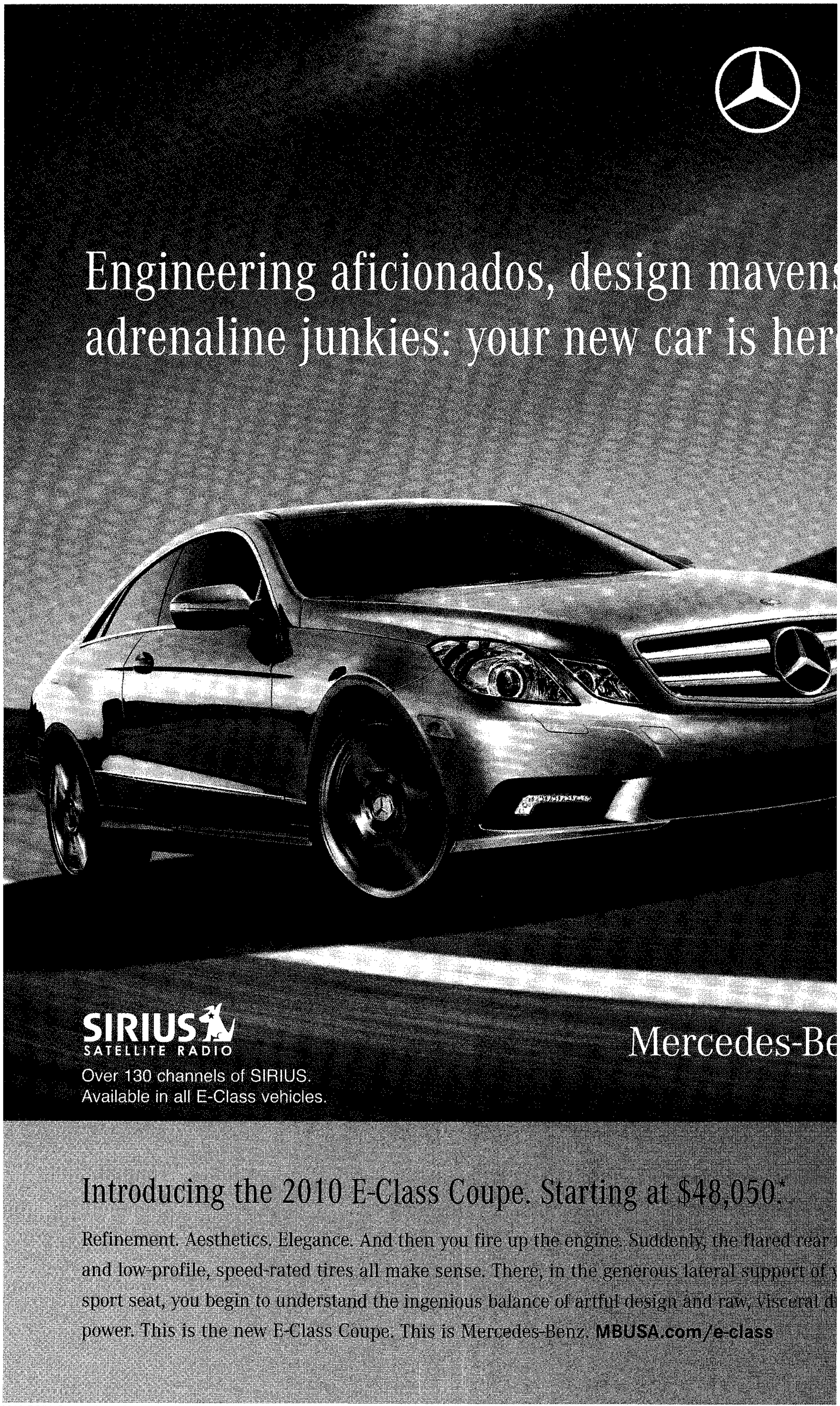
877-TDAMERITRADE
TDAMERITRADE.COM

At TD AMERITRADE, we don't just sell you our own investment products; we offer you a range of choices, such as CDs, mutual funds, stocks, and bonds. We also offer you objective third-party research and straightforward pricing. So you get guidance. Not a sales pitch. That's our idea of "objective." Isn't it yours?

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME FOR A SECOND OPINION.

TD AMERITRADE

Market volatility and system availability may delay account access and trade executions. All investments involve risk and may lose value. TD AMERITRADE, Division of TD AMERITRADE, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. TD AMERITRADE is a trademark jointly owned by TD AMERITRADE IP Company, Inc. and The Toronto-Dominion Bank. © 2009 TD AMERITRADE IP Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Used with permission.



Engineering aficionados, design maven
adrenaline junkies: your new car is her
SIRIUS
SATELLITE RADIO
Mercedes-Be

Over 130 channels of SIRIUS.
Available in all E-Class vehicles.

Introducing the 2010 E-Class Coupe. Starting at $48,050.*

Refinement. Aesthetics. Elegance. And then you fire up the engine. Suddenly, the flared rear
and low-profile, speed-rated tires all make sense. There, in the generous lateral support of y
sport seat, you begin to understand the ingenious balance of artful design and raw, visceral d
power. This is the new E-Class Coupe. This is Mercedes-Benz. **MBUSA.com/e-class**

2010 E 550 Coupe shown in optional Iridium Silver metallic paint with optional Premium 2 and Appearance Packages. *MSRP for E 350 Coupe. MSRP for E 550 Coupe starting at
itle, regis., transportation charge and dealer prep. ©2009 SIRIUS XM Radio Inc. ©2009 Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC **For more information, call 1-800-FOR-**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED